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HISTORY (1933–1948) WHAT WE CHOOSE TO REMEMBER

Margaret Monahan Hogan

James Lies

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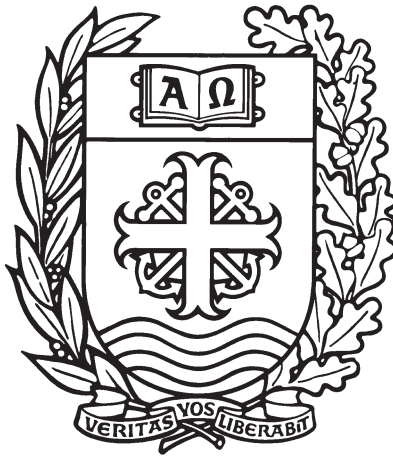
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HISTORY
(1933–1948)
WHAT WE CHOOSE
TO REMEMBER



UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND

GARAVENTA CENTER FOR
CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL LIFE
AND AMERICAN CULTURE
2011

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"Where are our Brothers, the Strong, Free Men?"

Artist: Alice Lok Cahana

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In the Twenty-first Century, American Catholic universities are positioned to be powerful voices of the Catholic tradition to this country and powerful voices of its intellectual tradition to a world in need of repair and renewal. To this end, the University of Portland — which claims the title *Oregon's Catholic University* — welcomes scholars of many views to its campus to explore topics from the past and in the present to shape the future. In the academic years 2009 through 2010, the University focused attention on the topic *History (1933-1948): What We Choose to Remember*. Among the activities were an international conference, courses, papers, and lectures. This book is the record of some of those activities. Each of the authors acknowledges that he or she speaks in his or her own voice as each author attempts to address this difficult period in history.

The fifteen years from 1933 to 1948 mark a period of terrible social upheaval, dislocation, and destruction wrought by totalitarianism and by war. This subversion of ordered history arose out of a matrix defined by a set of ideas — millenarianism and scientism — and by brutal force. Millenarianism is a kind of utopianism which claims that human beings can build a perfect society in this world. In some places it presented itself as communism; in others it presented itself as a form of fascism. Nonetheless each had in common the eclipse of God, the eclipse of each individual human being as created in God's image, and the enthronement of the State. The cult of scientism operated from the hypothesis that it is possible to know the natural world completely and that this knowledge would provide the tools to manipulate and modify the world in the desired millenarian direction — the operation of Social Darwinism. The exercise of brutal force marked by technological efficiency and terror was bent on the destruction of the extant culture and the annihilation of all those who do not fit the vision for this new Utopia. While the results were so appalling as to shock the imagination, the horror and its causes, as the years pass, recede. And as memory no longer holds the images, the danger of repetition in new forms and in different places lurks. The university, which in its libraries and its faculty stores the account of these events, is the appropriate agent for remembering and for distilling the memory of times and events past so that the present and the future might be different.

In this the opening decades of the Twenty-first Century the remarkable advances in science and technology present extraordinary opportunities to serve human flourishing or frightening possibilities of means to accelerate human destruction. Advances in communication and travel provide occasions for the exchange of information and the face to face encounter of different people and cultures which provide occasions for either the affirmation of essential human equality and human dignity or a clash of cultures that might be without scale in human history. While the challenges of the present will be different from those of the past, the conflict of ideas in the present is marked by similarly competing elements. Among the competing elements are: (1) the intrinsic value of human life versus the instrumental value of human life; (2) the role of the professions to serve the vulnerable and the common good versus the role of the professions to serve the choices of a material and cultural elite; (3) the

recognition that there is truth and its understanding must be developed versus the claim that there is only power and only the ideas of the powerful have coin; and (4) the recognition of the presence of God who creates us, sustains us, and draws us to Him versus the claim that man is his own creator and end.

The University of Portland is uniquely situated to direct such a study and through this study to contribute to assist in the discovery of truth “without which freedom, justice, and human dignity are extinguished” (*Ex corde ecclesiae*). This privileged time of study directs the attention of our students, our faculty, and the community of the city of Portland to the recent past to guide the unfolding of the future. Among the activities in that time frame — 1933-1948 — were: (1) the destruction of millions of innocent human lives fomented by Communism (estimated to be more than 100 million) which declared human beings as instruments of the state and by Nazism (estimated to be more than twelve million including six million Jews, representing a third of the Jewish population of Europe at that time) which declared the worthlessness of some human life and destroyed millions in the name of racial purity or used human beings in the advance of science, medicine, and industry; (2) the removal of a people from a land — their dispossession of their properties, their lands, their national and religious heritages — to be replaced by a people with no land; (3) the heroic role of those — whether powerful or ordinary — who voiced public opposition or who quietly worked to save and rescue the vulnerable or who resisted in large and small acts; and (4) the struggle of institutions — churches and governments — to speak and operate effectively.

The first two papers in this book set both the scene and the tone of the historical period under scrutiny. Both are personal accounts. The narrative of Archbishop Elias Chacour recounts the dispossession of the people of the land known as Palestine to make way for the immigration of displaced Jews and the creation of the state of Israel. The story of Alice Lok Cahana recounts the horror of a young girl as she witnessed the destruction of her family and her way of life, and as she bore assaults on her person and dignity. Both stories are stark in the realities they recall and amazing in the grace they offer for reconciliation that is possible only in the acknowledgment of truth.

Archbishop Elias Chacour — *Abuna* — is the Archbishop of Akko, Haifa, Nazareth and Galilee of the Melkite Catholic Church. He is a noted author and a peace advocate who has been tireless in his efforts to promote reconciliation between the Arabs — Christian and Muslim — and the Jews of the land called holy. Archbishop Chacour has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. He authored two best-selling books, *Blood Brothers* and *We Belong to the Land*. His paper tells of the forced eviction of his family from the village of Biram, and of their struggles as refugees and second class citizens in their own land. His words ask for justice so that there can be peace among the Arabs, Jews, Christians and Muslims who must live on this land. His works are evident in the schools that he has built so that education of disadvantaged children — Christians, Jews and Muslims — may be instrumental in securing peace through justice. Archbishop Chacour pleads with Americans to love

all the people of the Holy Land and to be agents of justice for all the people who belong to that land.

In *Miracles in Auschwitz: Word and Art as Kaddish*, Alice Lok Cahana presents a moving account of the confusion and horror experienced by the Jews of Hungary in 1944. As defeat was closing in on Germany, the Nazi regime revved up its machinery to remove all traces of the Jewish people from Europe. Her town in Hungary was emptied and its residents loaded aboard cattle cars. Her people — including her mother, sister and little brother — were delivered to the death camp at Auschwitz. She alone survived. Her art work gives voice to her experiences and her hopes for a world which will never again witness genocide. Her message in her words and in her work is forgive, but do not forget. When she spoke to the students at the University of Portland, she said of her art and her writing, “My art and my writing are my *Kaddish* for those who did not survive.” One of her major works of art — *No Names* — now hangs in the Vatican Museum’s collection of modern religious art. She presented the work to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in 2006. It stands at the entrance to the Sistine Chapel. Her work, *Where are our Brothers, the Strong, Free Men?* with its central focus on Raoul Wallenberg and its internal framing with scenes of the concentration camps, provides the front piece for this book and we are grateful to her for allowing us to include it.

In *The Vatican and the United States: Rapprochement in Time of War*, Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., Kenan Professor of Religious History and American History at the University of Virginia, recounts the development of the relationship between the United States government and the Holy See in the first half of the Twentieth Century as indifference and isolation were replaced by a degree of mutual respect and a share of mutual concern. Fr. Fogarty’s paper focuses on three general areas: 1) the growing appreciation of the Vatican Secretary of State, Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, for the United States; 2) the mutual concern of the Holy See and the government of the United States for events in Germany in the late 1930s; and 3) an overview of the relationship between the Vatican and the United States during the war. Fr. Fogarty takes the historian’s “jeweler’s eye” to his task as he examines each facet that presents itself for scrutiny, even as he patiently awaits the presentation of others’ jewels — the archival materials that remain as yet unavailable — to be studied.

In *Interpreting “We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah:” The History and Development of a Document of the Holy See*, Eugene Fisher, former associate director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Consultor to the Holy See’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, recounts the recent history of the development of that Vatican document. From his privileged position as a member of the staff of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Fisher presents the difficulties surrounding the emergence of *We Remember*. He chronicles the early discussions which prepared the way for the emergence of *We Remember*, and he reveals some of the obstacles that hampered its articulation and its understanding. The Vatican statement was intended to be a statement that acknowledged the horror of the Holocaust, the treatment

of Jews by Christians and, moreover, to be a call for repentance and conversion of heart. Fisher maintains that because the Vatican document was to be understood as a statement of the universal church, as such, it could not contain in detail the different treatment of Jews in different countries of Europe. For that reason the statement of key local churches where the Holocaust occurred were to be published before the Vatican statement. Fisher presents, in chronological order from 1994 to 1998, summaries of the statements of the Bishops and their conferences from Hungary, Germany, Poland, the United States, Holland, Switzerland, France and Italy. Having presented that preparatory work, Fisher turns his attention to the document itself, its distillation out of the alembic constituted by Vatican offices, and the response to the document from Jewish and Catholic scholars, participants, and observers. Fisher concludes his paper with a presentation of the goals developed by the USCCB for teaching the *Shoah* in the United States.

In *Why History Matters for Christian-Jewish Relations*, Fr. John T. Pawlikowski, professor of Social Ethics at the Catholic Theological Union at the University of Chicago, suggests that the “turn toward history” that has marked the development of Christian theology in the contemporary period provides an essential framework for examining important issues of the past — both recent and distant — as well as a tool for theological development in the present toward a fuller theological understanding in the future. Among the questions of the past to which Fr. Pawlikowski applies the tool of historical study is the question of anti-Semitism in the history of the Church and he suggests that the Church has not adequately come to grips with its anti-Semitic legacy. Evidence for this failure appears in the writing of the document *We Remember* and in the examination of the question of God’s covenant with His people. Moreover, Fr. Pawlikowski claims that recent biblical and historical research, such as that found in the studies titled *The Parting of the Ways*, may contribute to a profound reimagining of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

In *From Pacifist to Conspirator: The Ethical Journey of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, Walton Padelford, University Professor of Economics at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, details Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s movement from avowed pacifist to conspirator in an attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Early on Bonhoeffer realized the dangers of the Nazi regime and worked within the realms of the academy and the church to curtail its influence without, in the end, much effect. In a letter to Reinhold Niebuhr during an extended visit to the United States in 1939, explaining his ill-advised return, Bonhoeffer wrote that “the Christians of Germany would have to make a decision between wanting the victory of their nation, and the death of a Christian civilization, or the defeat of their nation and the survival of a Christian civilization. You cannot ... remain out of a country when your fellow Christians face such a momentous issue.” Upon his return to Germany, his interactions with the *Abwehr*, Germany’s counter-intelligence movement, moved him to consider the importance of removing Hitler. In his mind he is left with no choice; Bonhoeffer joined the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler, which would lead to his own execution in April of 1945. Given this detailed narrative, Bonhoeffer’s move

from pacifist to conspirator proves less startling than it appears at first glance. He was zealous for the truth of the gospel and the freedom to preach it. Bonhoeffer believed that the times required him to take action not in spite of the fact that he was a Christian but because of it.

In *Bonhoeffer and Delp: the View from Below*, Steven P. Millies, associate professor of Political Science at the University of South Carolina Aiken, examines the lives and writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Alfred Delp as they, as Christians, faced the challenge of Nazism. He suggests that their experience of suffering brought profound changes in their understanding of the role of the Christian in the world. Millies claims that both Delp and Bonhoeffer — from the dark hole of their imprisonment — experienced Christianity in “the view from below” which he describes as a distinguishing mark of early Christianity that called the Christian to identify with suffering and to bear the cross. Millies suggests that the embrace of “the view from below” provides a rich perspective for the engagement of Christians and the Christian churches in contemporary political life.

In *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Journey of Resistance*, Richard A. Loomis, a specialist in theological ethics and church history, traces the trajectory of Dietrich Bonhoeffer from immersion in the interior life of the Church to resistance within the Church faced with outside political pressure, to political pressure in the name of the Church, and finally to conspiracy against the political regime. The journey of Bonhoeffer is described as the transition from easy grace, the grace that marks intellectual assent to doctrine or principles, to costly grace, the grace that requires following Jesus even to the point of losing life. Loomis suggests that Bonhoeffer's life is instructive to those who journey in this pilgrim church as they struggle to locate the appropriate response of the Church to political life and as they struggle to realize that failure, such as the historical failure of Bonhoeffer and his companions, remains a real possibility. The only consolation for such action resides in the knowledge of having responded to the calling of the Lord. The Church honors the memory of the sacrifice of Bonhoeffer and his companions by living the Lord's calling in the present.

In *1 Man's Fight: 1,200 Saved*, Temitayo Ope Peters — an undergraduate at the time of the presentation of this paper — recounts the story of a Polish Jew named Tuvia Bielski who sought to establish and protect a community of about 1,200 Jews in the midst of the Holocaust. With the help of his two younger brothers, Asael and Zus, Tuvia created a forest enclave for these Jews, while at the same time the brothers participated in guerilla warfare attacks against the Nazi forces. Peters maintains that faced with the awful attack on life, family, and way of life, Tuvia Bielski was able to reach down and find resources within himself to lead this community out of the darkness of National Socialism. Peters suggests that while the Holocaust remains a sad reminder of the fallen nature of man, the story of the Holocaust contains some redemptive stories as well. He concludes with the reminder that as we honor the memory of those who perished during this tragic time, we must not forget those who defied it though their survival.

In *The Prisoner Hospital at Buna-Monowitz*, Ewa K. Bacon, professor of History at Lewis

University, tells what she describes as the “little-known” story of the prisoner hospital in the Auschwitz III camp, Buna-Monowitz. Contrary to the deserved reputations of large labor camp infirmaries that did little to aid their ill and dying prisoners, the prisoners of Buna-Monowitz organized their prisoner-hospital in such a way that lives were saved and patients healed. The Buna-Monowitz prisoners working in the camp hospital managed to bring prisoner-physicians together to form a functioning hospital and clinic from mid-1943 until the end of the camps in January, 1945. Bacon tells a comprehensive and compelling story about the effective agency of motivated prisoners and their adeptness at organizing even in the midst of the chaos of the complex of Auschwitz camps. In so doing, the workers in the prisoner-hospital at Buna-Monowitz saved the lives of thousands of prisoner-patients. According to Bacon, their ability to function so effectively and to create a moment of hope and healing within “this cauldron of inhumanity” aided them in coping with their own stress related to long-term incarceration and the brutality of the prison camps, even as it provided for the many prisoner-patients who were served by the resources and personnel of the prisoner-hospital at Buna-Monowitz.

In *Edith Stein: the Nature and Vocation of Women*, Professor Laura Garcia of Boston College presents the life and work of Edith Stein as one of the voices of the Catholic Women’s Movement in Germany in the 1920s and 30s. Stein, a Jewish convert to Catholicism, was a rising philosopher who had studied for a time under the tutelage of Edmund Husserl and to whose work she joined the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Her conversion experience culminated in her consecration as a Carmelite and ultimately to her death at Auschwitz. Garcia offers first a brief overview of the adult life of Stein — Sister Teresa Benedicta a Cruce. This is followed by a discussion of her theory of human nature, with special attention to her emphasis on the unique core or essence of each person. Professor Garcia then explores Stein’s understanding of the feminine difference, and presents three role models — the woman of *Proverbs 31*, Mary the Mother of God, and one’s own mother — that Stein presented as examples of authentic women. By way of conclusion, Garcia proposes a fourth member — Sister Teresa Benedicta a Cruce — as a model for women.

In *Paradigm Lost: Gertrud Von Le Fort’s **The Eternal Woman***, Professor Margaret Monahan Hogan, McNerney Hanson Professor Emeritus at the University of Portland, examines the work of Baroness Gertrud von Le Fort — a leader, along with Edith Stein, of the Catholic Women’s Movement in Germany in the 1930s. Le Fort was an outspoken opponent of the Nazi regime and, as a convert, a force in the renewal and redirection of religious idealism marked by respect for religious traditions — Catholic, Protestant and Jewish — in the Germany of her time. Her opposition to National Socialism aroused the ire of the Nazi regime and she was forced to leave Germany for some time. The paper presents the work of Gertrud von Le Fort as one of the voices of women opposing a particular regime which suppressed the religious and spiritual aspirations of its people and expressing, in her account of the incarnate symbol that is Mary, a model for the role of woman as an antidote to assuage some of the ills of con-

temporary culture.

In *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: How and Why He Chose to Remember*, Professor Douglas Kries, Bernard J. Coughlin Professor of Philosophy at Gonzaga University, recalls the terrorism of Communism in the period 1933-1948. He examines the central role of remembering in the life and writing of, perhaps, its most famous historian — Solzhenitsyn. He begins with Solzhenitsyn's departure from the telling of the story in *Gulag Archipelago* to his addressing those distraught people who having been sentenced to the gulag as they worry about which of their belongings they should carry with them. Solzhenitsyn tells them to bring their memory; this alone cannot be taken from them and this alone will carry them from the present, connect them to the past, and provide the foundation for the future. Kries describes how Solzhenitsyn remembered the gulag; why he remembered the gulag; the role of the Russian people, including Russian Jewry, in the disasters that befell Russia; and, finally, the need of the Russian people to acknowledge their common guilt and in that acknowledgement have the courage to embrace their need for communal repentance.

In *Conflicts from the Past; Lessons for the Present: Dr. Alice von Platen v. Dr. Karl Brandt*, Dr. Peter M. Carney, himself a physician, explores the professional lives of Dr. Brandt and Dr. Platen as each, from sharply different perspectives, faced particular challenges in a Germany tainted by Nazi ideology. Dr. Karl Brandt is presented as one who subordinated the practice of medicine to the service of the goals of Nazi ideology. Dr. Platen, one of the German physicians appointed as an observer of the Nuremberg Trial of Physicians, gives an account in her post war book — *The Killings of the Mentally Ill in Germany* — of the descent of medicine from its healing role to its embrace of the destruction of vulnerable human life in service to the goods of the state. Dr. Carney asks of this historical period how human beings created in the image and likeness of God could perpetrate such evil. In this paper Dr. Carney acknowledges the fact and causes of human conflict; he offers approaches to mitigate evil and conflict; and he suggests that some contemporary practices in medicine risk the accomplishment of the intrinsic ends of the practice of the profession to external goods including the good of money. This last is a subversion of the practice of medicine and leaves the practice of the profession vulnerable in the face of the pressure of other external goods.

In *The Narrow Path: SS Morality and The Memoirs of Rudolph Höss*, Professor Morgan Rempel of the University of Southern Mississippi, examines the operative morality of Rudolph Höss who served as Commandant of Auschwitz from 1940-1943. Rempel claims that it is incorrect to conceive of Höss as devoid of morality. On the contrary Höss operated from within a matrix of morality informed by the principles of Nazi ideology. After presenting these principles as specified in the war time speeches of Heinrich Himmler, Rempel makes the case that with respect to both the “morality” and “hardness” on display in Höss's memoirs, the unrepentant Commandant of Auschwitz comes frighteningly close to embodying Himmler's vision of the ideal SS killer. Rempel recounts Höss's appropriation of the principles of Nazi morality in the operation of Auschwitz and Höss's adherence to its principles even in his de-

fense at his trial before the Nuremberg Tribunal.

In *Resistance as Reaction: Martin Heidegger's Anti-Totalitarian Offspring*, Professor Aaron D. Hoffman of Bellarmine University claims that the philosophical positions developed by Heidegger, notwithstanding his embrace of Nazism, provided his students with the capacity — derived from a particular manner and measure of philosophical questioning — to develop positions which eschewed totalitarianism and which embraced the Enlightenment tradition of freedom and democracy. Couched in the European conviction that the Twentieth century was not one of triumph, a prevailing American attitude, but rather one of tragedy and horror, Hoffman's paper conveys "the importance of the idea of 'resistance' to the horrors of the twentieth century by a group of thinkers" who come out of the European intellectual tradition but whose philosophical perspective is indebted to Heidegger. The irony to which Hoffman alludes in his paper is rooted in the fact that while Heidegger is undeniably a brilliant philosopher and thinker, he is also remembered for his public support of the Nazi Party and his lifelong refusal to openly disavow or even explain his support and work for the Nazi regime. Hoffman's particular focus is on the Heidegger's Jewish students including Hannah Arendt, Hans Jonas, Hans Georg Gadamer, Karl Löwith, Herbert Marcuse, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Leo Strauss. Hoffman avers that these philosophers moved out of Heidegger but away from Heidegger to fashion philosophical positions in the service of human freedom.

In *Accountants and What They May Wish to Forget (But Do So at Their Profession's Peril)*, Ellen Lippman, associate professor of Accounting at the University of Portland and Paula Wilson, associate professor of Business and Leadership at the University of Puget Sound, examine the complicity of German accountants in the perpetration of the Holocaust. The accounting profession does not immediately appear to be one in which culpability for any aspect of the Holocaust might be borne. Nonetheless, Lippman and Wilson tell a fascinating story of accountancy's critical importance in determining the efficient allocation of resources and insuring the quality of decision-making. The accumulation and the dissemination of information can have an enormous impact on the decisions made by those for whom information is gathered and with whom it is shared. In the end, accountants hold more power than one might assume and, as this paper explains, they exercised it during the Holocaust in unconscionable ways. Many prisoners in the concentration camps were farmed out to various German firms to provide free labor in their factories or the firms set up factories in the camps so as to take advantage of the prison laborers on site. The corporate accountants in these firms used normal business analysis to monitor and report on the use of slave and free laborers. Among their accounting practices, projections were made of estimated revenue from the leasing of prisoners to for-profit companies, as well as the anticipated revenue from the selling of the prisoners' body parts upon the prisoners' death, estimated as nine months from the time of their arrival at the camp. Death through labor was a calculated technique that coexisted with death in the gas chambers, and sophisticated accounting techniques helped capture informa-

tion about these options. Thus, the financial statement described the operations of the camps and the working to death of the concentration camp victims, without any expressed concern for the fate of the prisoners. Lippman and Wilson point to the inherent moral nature of the accountants' vocation even as they acknowledge the horrors of these particular accountants' complicity in the Holocaust.

In *An Achievable Two State Solution*, Frank Afranji, the Rev. Dr. Rodney Page, and Rabbi Joshua Stampfer, community leaders in the city of Portland Oregon, reflect on the decades of bloodshed and violence in a land that must be shared by Palestinians, Israelis, Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Arabs if there is to be peace. The authors — respectively a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew — suggest a nuanced two state solution with equitable gains and losses for the contending parties. Their proffered solution has its source in the practice of the three authors, each representing a distinct religious tradition, operating as a team visiting and taking pilgrim/tourists to the lands still called holy so that the visitors might experience the turmoil and the hopes of the people of the land.

In *The Historical Myth of Zionism and Its Effects on the People of the Land*, J. G. Steubbel, a graduate student at Bellarmine University, examines Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel and its impact on those who live there. The Zionist movement — protected and assisted by Britain's policy for establishing a Jewish homeland — brought about drastic changes which seemed destined to predict Palestine's future history of displacement and terrorism. According to Steubbel, a basic understanding of the origins of this conflict is essential if one is to understand the behaviors of both sides. Additionally, Steubbel looks at the ongoing expansion of Israeli territory since 1948 through forms of violence and intimidation. There are diverse opinions on the legitimacy of Zionist efforts to establish a completely Jewish state in Israel. While in theory, Zionism postured itself as a commendable movement created to relieve Jewish suffering, in actuality it has meant the disenfranchisement of an indigenous people, resulting in what Steubbel describes as the largest refugee group in the history of the world. She suggests two points that must be acknowledged if a genuine peace in the Middle East is to be possible: first, that Zionism created the Arab-Israeli conflict and its political goals do not represent the religious prescriptions of either Judaism or Christianity; and secondly, that there must be acceptance of the emergence of a Semitic bi-national state of both Palestinians and Jews who are genuinely committed to cooperative equality and working together without the influence of Western powers or other special interest groups.

In *Immigration and National Identity in the Federal Republic of Germany*, Professor Eliot Dickinson, a professor of political science at the University of Western Oregon, explores the tensions in the contemporary attempt of the Federal Republic of Germany to fashion an immigration policy. Among the tensions are myth, reality, memory, and aspiration. The early history of the myth, Dickinson avers, may be found in the words of the Roman historian Tacitus describing the German tribes in 98 A.D. as a "*propriam et sinceram et tantum sui similem gentem*," a "distinct, unmixed race, like none but themselves." Dickinson suggests that this

myth has a long history and remains embedded in the psyche for some in the Federal Republic. Yet the reality is that the migration of peoples along and through the borders of Germany throughout history — before and after Tacitus to the present moment — resulted in a variety of cultures within the changing borders of the political entity that is Germany (The United Nations reports that Germany is now home to the third highest number of international immigrants) and as well, the presence of a significant number of those claiming German identity working and living outside the physical boundaries of the polity. The memory includes that of the early history of the question of German identity as well as the super nationalism that appeared in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th Centuries. The modern super nationalism was marked by an exclusive sense of what it meant to be a German and it unleashed one of the great genocides of the 20th Century. Within the matrix formed by these tensions, the Federal Republic aspires to fashion an immigration policy that reflects the identity of a people and open to the possibilities afforded by the contributions of others.

In *"He laughs loudly: Hitler, Nazism, and Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg"*, Sammy Basu, associate professor and chair of the department of Politics at Willamette University, examines the influence of Richard Wagner's anti-Semitism and his operatic art on the program of Nazism and on the character and performance of Adolph Hitler. While it is generally acknowledged that the operas of Wagner, beginning with *Rienzi*, carry autobiographical elements of Wagner's perception of his life, it is specifically acknowledged that *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* is the most autobiographical of Wagner's operas. Basu maintains that *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* played a critical and singular role in the self-understanding and aspirations of Hitler and Nazism. In the first part of his paper Basu connects the formative history of *Die Meistersinger* to the life and the prose works, including the anti-Semitic essays, of Wagner. In the second section he sketches the story of *Die Meistersinger* with particular attention to the characters, drama, and themes as carriers of meaning transferable to the persona of Hitler and to the Germany contemporaneous with the rise of Hitler. In the third part of the paper Basu suggests three levels of correspondence between *Die Meistersinger* and Hitler's Nazism. The three levels are: (1) an aesthetic reaction against degenerate modernism; (2) a demonstration of the extra-political role of the leader; and (3) the exemplification of the communal expulsion of the inner enemy.

In *The Art of Survival: Art as a Response to the Holocaust*, Molly Powers, a senior undergraduate at California Baptist University, writes of a large movement of artists who have chosen to create art as a response to the Holocaust. Four primary visual responses have developed: first, concrete drawings or paintings by survivors about memories of the camps and family members; second, abstract art by survivors expressing confusion and terror by means of this more abstract form of expression, third, works by artists who did not experience the Holocaust themselves but were affected by those who did and who create art based on the memories of the survivors; and fourth, art again by those who did not experience the Holocaust personally but created art based on their own reading and research. By creating these art pieces, Powers

explains that artists hope to create restoration for those who survived, and “to repair the damage that was done by acting as vessels of divine light.” She claims that it does not matter whether a person experienced the events firsthand, secondhand, or simply read about the events in a textbook. What is important is that an artist created a work that was not only motivated by an emotional response, but also a work that evokes an emotional response in the viewer. While there are controversies among the creators of Holocaust art, concern has been raised over whether modern audiences even want to see art based upon the Holocaust. With so many portrayals in literature, film, and poetry, it is often the viewer’s challenge to not become desensitized and it is the artist’s challenge to portray their works in a way that can reach a society that has been desensitized to mass violence.

In *Stifling Daily Life: The Erosion of Civil Liberties of Jewish Citizens by Nazi Administrative Decree*, Eloise Rosenblatt, R.S.M., a Sister of Mercy of Burlingame, California, and current editor of the MAST Journal, examines the period of 1933-1938 in Germany, prior to the implementation of the Final Solution which sent Jews to their deaths in concentration camps. Rosenblatt attends particularly the special rules created by the Nazis to harass and isolate Jewish citizens — adults and children — in their daily lives, to punish them for remaining in Germany and to encourage them to leave. She relays the traumatic memory of an academic colleague to distinguish literal memory from exemplary memory. Ultimately, focus is given to two primary documentary parallel sources: the first, a collection of official Nazi decrees published in eight volumes; and second, the personal interviews conducted by the author with two Holocaust survivors, Alfred and Susanne Batzdorff. Without knowing the exact texts of the Nazi decrees at the time, they recalled the impact of these repressive measures on them as children and teens, prior to leaving Germany after *Kristallnacht* in October, 1938. In the period from 1933-1938, these decrees had a major impact on the professional lives of their parents, but the decrees also affected their own school life, their social life, and their recreational life as evidenced in sections from this interview. Rosenblatt concludes with some observations from her own perspective, that of a lawyer and teacher of constitutional law. The first is that the collapse of the separation of powers allowed the Nazis to operate as a totalitarian regime and to render the citizens powerless to intervene or end the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. The second is the recognition of the need of citizens to maintain the principle of separation of powers in local, state and federal government.

In *Between Promise and Fulfillment — Shoah/Nakbah — Offerings of Memory and History*, Judith Mendelsohn Rood, a professor of History and Middle Eastern Studies at Biola University in Los Angeles, recounts the journey from her youth in which she heard the stories of her family as they fled Germany in the face of the threat of Nazism through her teenage years as she encountered life in contemporary Israel. This first phase of her journey propelled her to pursue graduate studies, to engage in post graduate research, and to teach the history of the Middle East and Islam over the past fifteen years. A next step in her journey was her visit to Theresienstadt — a place where members of her family perished in the Final

Solution. There, she reports, that she received, finally, the peace to write about the connections between her family history and her scholarship. The present milepost on her journey is marked by a transformed perspective — one framed in a dispensationalist view — enriched by memory and the study of history that she hopes might be used redemptively in the contemporary Arab-Israeli conflict. She hopes that this further understanding will provide a vantage point from which to speak so that future generations will not point to this generation and say that we, too, have failed to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.

The University of Portland Garaventa Center for Catholic Intellectual Life and American Culture is deeply grateful to Mary Garaventa and her family for their continuous support of the Center which bears their family name and for their continuing support of the University of Portland which is *Alma Mater* to Silvio Garaventa, Marie (Cookie) Garaventa Adler, and Joseph Garaventa.

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Margaret Monahan Hogan, Ph.D.

James M. Lies, C.S.C., Ph.D.

SECTION 1
REMEMBERING THE SUFFERING
OF THE PEOPLE

FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND

PEACE WITH JUSTICE



BY ARCHBISHOP ELIAS CHACOUR

It is a great honor and privilege to be with you this evening, and I would like to express my gratitude to the Garaventa Center and the University of Portland and to all those who are willing to host a person who is rather a walking contradiction — for that is what I am in fact. I hope you will never forget me. It is not every evening that a Palestinian stands in front of you and tries to introduce some of his life experiences as a young human being who was born to a Palestinian family and who was meant to be a simple peasant of Galilee, and who slowly, slowly, became a visitor all around the world to share his story with his brothers and sisters, the human beings.

I am here this evening to share this story once more with you because of two requests that I will ask of you at the end of my talk. I am going to talk about the ongoing conflict between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinian Arabs. This is a topic that is very hard to deal with. Every time I try to speak about Jews or Palestinians or Jews and Palestinians, I have the impression I am taking a knife and moving it in a raw wound. It hurts. It hurts a lot. Whatever I might say might be a contradiction; it might be controversial. Some with preset agendas might be coming just to see what this Palestinian is going to say against Israel. Well, you will not need to use your weapons against me. I am not going to say anything bad against Israel. I love Israel. I love Israel so much that I do not hesitate to say loud and clear, “Stop what you are doing. You are hurting us in our utmost dignity.” What is wrong between the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews? Who is right and who is wrong? Is there any hope for a resolution of this conflict between them both? Is there hope?

And then, my two questions: Why do I share them with you, you people in Portland. Where you live and where I live there is a difference of eleven hours. It is six o'clock in the morning back home. Why do I tell you all these stories? These are the questions I am not trying to answer, but to touch, and in touching, I hope that I will raise more questions in your minds so that you go on searching — I hope, not so much for answers, but for more and more questions.

Who is Archbishop Chacour? I was not born an Archbishop. I was born to a Christian family. I am a Palestinian. I am a very proud Palestinian, by the way. I have nothing to be ashamed of being Palestinian. I am a Palestinian-Arab. My mother language — the Arabic language — is very easy to learn. You laugh. I know your reputation. Americans, you are not great at languages. For that, I forgive you. Arabic is very easy to learn. If you don't believe me, come back home with me. I will take you to the kindergarten. Even our children speak Arabic. If they can do so, why can't you? A language is not an impossibility. I have learned eleven languages. I wish I could learn some more. A language is much more than vocabulary. It is a mentality. It is a civilization. It is an approach. It is a philosophy.

Palestinian. Arab. I am also a Palestinian-Arab-Christian. I carry the icon of the Mother of God with Jesus. And, I am an Archbishop. Well, may I unfold a secret for you. I was not born Christian. Thank God. Thank God. When I discovered that I was not born Christian, I think it was the major discovery in my life, and that was the key for me to go to the Jew, and to the Muslim, and to the Americans, and ask them, "What were you born? ... Christian? ... Muslim? ... Jewish? ... or were you like me? I was born a baby." I was created in the image and the likeness of God. I have to struggle to protect my likeness to God, for there are some people who look at their neighbors and consider them to be sub-human beings. I am not a sub-human being. I was born a baby ... a baby human being.

Not long ago, I converted to Christianity. Not long ago. You will have to excuse me, you are speaking to a Palestinian peasant. We do not measure time like you. We should never forgive the Swiss for putting this thing into our hands. For us, believe me in our mentality and our approach, we still feel we are part of a small fraction of time. One thousand years for us are like one day before the Lord. So what are two thousand years? It is the day before yesterday. It was just two days ago that He was here hanging around with our boys and girls, with our shepherds, with our elderly, sharing our weddings, and our funerals. My goodness, He was here in our villages, hanging around, using our own life to make the Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven. I hope you guess about whom I am speaking. And is not just for me that God lives in Heaven. He is merely also that man from my Galilee, my countryman, Jesus Christ. He was speaking with such unique authority that if we consider His famous Sermon on the Mount you will realize what He said. He never spoke to my ancestors, the disciples, saying, "Ah, sit down, you are blessed because you're hungry and thirsty. Sit down and contemplate peace." Never did He dare say that. We have two texts of the Sermon on the Mount — one found in Matthew (5, 3-12) and the other found in Luke (6, 17-49) and I am here in the sight of people who are very, very, versed in the Bible studies. There are two texts and one says *Arshrei* and the second says *Tvahun*, and both mean straighten up, get up, get straight, straighten up yourself. Get to know first where you are going and then go ahead straight. I read the Sermon on the Mount rather as saying get up, move, go ahead, do something, if you are hungry and thirsty for righteousness. Don't sit idle and contemplate peace. Peace needs no contemplator. Get up, move, go ahead, do something, if you are thirsty and you want to become peace makers, then become peace builders. Peace needs people who are proactive.

These words impressed some of my ancestors — who were fishermen — so much that they abandoned their nets and followed this strange compatriot from Nazareth. They followed him all through until they reached bloody Jerusalem. Oh, don't take that against me. I am a man from Galilee. We don't like Jerusalem so much. We let our man go there once and He ended very badly. He ended by being crucified and buried, and if He were not the man from Galilee, He would not have risen up. The third day He was risen. He said to my ancestors, "Stay here, I will send you something" and fifty days later while they were gathered in one of the upper rooms in Jerusalem, doors locked out of fear of the Jews (I don't know why the Jews are

frightening everybody, even in those times), He did send to them something. What did He send to them? What? ... the Holy Spirit? No, that's wrong. That is absolutely wrong. Read your Acts of the Apostles ... Tongues of fire ... Sorry? No. I'm sorry. Read the Acts of the Apostles. He first sent to them His wind — a great rush of wind, His *Ruah*, His Wind, and He stormed them. It was very strong wind. You Americans know when the wind becomes strong, you don't go into a strong wind, you don't go into the storm. He stormed their minds, and cleansed their minds from so many preconceived ideas, so many prejudices, that they understood there is a new chosenness, a new election. (You don't dare to speak about that when you are in America. You are afraid that the Jews will accuse you of anything, but they don't.) This new election is a new invitation to share the Divine Banquet with the Lamb of God. Who was invited, according to these people who were being cleansed? It was no more the Jews, I am sorry for you brothers and sisters. It is not the Christians either. Not yet the Muslims. Who was invited? It is only and exclusively man and woman — every man, every woman. What do we do with a chosen people who should have known, but do not, that they are chosen people? We'll ask them, "Are you a man and are you a woman?" If they say, yes, please remind them they are invited at the same time with the same warmth to that Divine Banquet. But, if they say we are not man and woman, you face a real problem. You don't know how because you have a very short memory.

You don't remember when we Christians pretended that without baptism, there is no salvation. We've come so far, and that is so good. But what kind of baptism? Reformed, re-reformed, not yet reformed. Because we were unable to decide, the Western World organized thirty years of wars of religions only to end by going back to a starting point. We don't know. Then we decided that every baptism made in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is okay. We can also forget that you are men and women. They went from that upper room after the tongues came and these were representing the Holy Spirit. They went all over the world preaching something absolutely new that at the end overturned the whole Roman Empire. They started teaching something very simple. From now on there is no privilege for Jew against Gentile.

You know what, ladies and gentleman, as a young Palestinian, I always wished to have heard some Christian leader standing up courageously, sixty-seven years ago, and say, "There can be no privilege for German against Jew." Nobody said that. A Muslim King said that, the King Morocco. And we are still waiting, impatiently, for such a leader to stand up and to say, here in the States, there in Israel, in Europe, everywhere, "There can't be a justification for privilege for Jews against Palestinians." And there is no privilege for man against woman, no privilege for Lord against Lady. Do you know why? It is because you are all called to become adopted children of God — even you American Christians. This is the good news we have carried all around the world and shared with you. It is then that I became Christian — the day before yesterday. It seems that we have given you everything about Christ and we have nothing left, and now we are bringing you back to give us some knowledge about Him.

I am a Palestinian-Arab-Christian. I am also, to the confusion of many, a citizen of the State of Israel, and I love equally all the facets of my identity. But, as a human being I wanted to put a priority in my affiliation. Who am I first? Palestinian? ... Arab? ... Christian? ... Citizen of Israel? I could not agree to be first and above all, a citizen of Israel. I have a slight problem with Israel. Israel is an entity which is sixty-two years old and I am seventy-one years old. I am older than Israel. I did not immigrate into Israel at an early age. When I was a young boy a new reality appeared in my country, Palestine.

The first image I received about the Jews was given to me by my father. He gathered us children and said, "Children, there are rumors that within a few days we might see Jews coming to our village. This time they come with weapons. Be not afraid. They do not kill. These," my father said, "are survivors of a certain satanic plan to destroy them all and, thank God, the man who planned that (meaning Hitler) was not able to fulfill his bad thoughts. Those who survived are coming to our country. We need to show them that somewhere on this planet they are most welcome, especially because they are our Blood Brothers. We, and they, pride ourselves to be the descendants of an Iraqi citizen, whose name was Abraham." Father said, "We will prepare a big banquet to receive the soldiers and I ask you children to accept to give up your beds for the soldiers. We will sleep on the roofs of the houses." That means they will be considered as the owner of the house and you will be considered as a guest. That is typical Palestinian mentality.

They came. They did not kill anybody. They did not molest anybody. They accepted our beds and we slept on the roofs. In Galilee, it is so pleasant to sleep on the roof of the houses. Don't do that here. If you can keep yourself warm inside that is already an achievement. When you sleep on the roof, you can, if you are bored, start counting the stars — 10, 100, 1,000, 10,000. From evening to morning you count, and then in the morning you have the impression you are just starting to count. There are so many of them. We stayed ten days on the roofs, after which an officer of the army told all the heads of families, including my father, to come around to see him. They received orders to take their wives and children, lock their doors, deliver the keys to this man, and go away for two weeks. He gave them his promise that in two weeks you will return. What can simple unarmed peasants do except obey? I remember the evening when we left. I took a blanket on my shoulder; that is all I could carry. We went just one kilometer away from our home and stayed on our land under our olive, fig, almond trees and other trees. It was pleasant for two weeks; but after two weeks it became problematic. That is why the heads of families, my father included, gathered again and went back to see the same army officer. They went; but they never, ever came back. They were loaded onto military trucks like cattle and driven from northern Galilee to the neighborhood of the city of Nablus in the West Bank where the borders were freshly set and they were given orders — the orders were clear. "Cross the border, go away, this land no longer belongs to you. If you try to come back, you will be killed before you trespass across the border."

What can they do? They left. They walked down to the Jordan River and crossed the

Jordan River. Don't ask me what they did to cross the river, what kind of boat they needed to cross the river. The Jordan River is very special. It is the only river in the world that I know of about which there is much more ink spilled to describe it than there is water in it. It is not difficult to cross. They started their way of suffering, their *Via Dolorosa* — from the Jordan to Amann, from Amann to Damascus, from Damascus to Beirut. They were stuck in these Arab countries and they became the famous Palestinian Arab Refugees in the Arab countries, until an American President would think himself as a place taker of God and said, "These Palestinians should no more think of returning. They have to manage as they can." But Mr. President, you are not God.

A very few, among them my father, were able to infiltrate back through the northern borders with Lebanon and Israel. That is how we knew what happened to them. My father did not stay still waiting for the right to return. We had become refugees in an abandoned room in the village of Gish nearby. He wanted always to return. He initiated a meeting of all remaining adults and heads of families, and they went to the Supreme Court of Justice in Israel. The resolution of the Court was in their favor. The Court stated that these are peaceful people. They have the right to return to their homes. The military opposed the decision of the Court. My father and the other families went back to the Court in 1950 for the second time. The second resolution was again in their favor. Once again the military opposed the decision of the Court. My father and the other families went a third time in 1951 to the Court and the third resolution was like the first and the second. So they decided to take their wives and children, and go home. It is a march of two hours only. We started marching. As we reached the neighborhood of our village and we were going down on a hillside suddenly airplanes came, we did not know where from, and started raining bombs and explosives onto our homes, in front of our eyes. We stood there, seeing our homes fly into the air, our church partly destroyed. We stood there and wept. That hillside is called since then The Biram People's Wailing Wall.

One of the most painful experiences in my life was just after that — a year later — when a certain Jew came to the village where we had become refugees. He wanted to hire people to harvest what he said were "his olives, his figs, his almonds, and his grapes," and these were our trees. He wanted to hire our own people. There was a strong discussion between the older and the younger generation. The elders wanted to go and collect their own fruits for that Jew. They said, "If we go, we will collect the fruits and we will save the trees, otherwise a foreigner will break the branches and when we come back, we will have no trees." I accompanied my father and mother for three or four days while they were collecting our own figs for that Jew, I don't know who he was. All during that time I never saw the eyes of my father or my mother dry. They were collecting their fruits with their tears. This continued ... one year ... two years. After that they noticed that they are becoming slaves of that Jew. They said, "We stop. Let the trees be destroyed. When we come back, we shall plant new ones."

My father died in 1992 in Haifa. We had no place to bury him. We carried him back to the cemetery of our village. It is not true that I say we don't have the right to return. We have the

right to return, but only after we die. We want to return alive. Maybe some Jew will be wandering around, not knowing where he's going, who would like to bring hospitality back again to this land. I delight in taking Jewish friends from Israel back to my father's house that's been ruined. I collect figs from my fig trees and give these to my Jewish friends saying, "Eat, see how sweet are our fruits even after sixty-two years of abandonment."

My father was a very strange man. He very much wanted that one of his children would become a priest. There are five of us — four brothers and one sister. The sister is excluded by nature — we are Catholics. So, he sent my eldest brother to the seminary in Jerusalem. He stayed there three months and escaped. My brother did not want to become a priest. My second brother threatened to commit suicide, if my father would send him to seminary. So he was not sent. My third brother escaped from Palestine to Jordan for fear of being sent to seminary. That left only me ... the youngest. I was the youngest. My father delivered me to the Bishop. I was too young to say yes or no. I just followed. It was exciting to leave the village on the plain of refugees and to go to Haifa. There, I began to think — why not become a priest. After all, I would give my life to that champion, Jesus Christ, with whom I spent all my youth. I used to go away and climb on trees and sit there, like Zacchaeus, feeling present to Him and He was present to me. After awhile I did start liking to become a priest. I said, "That way I can give my life to restore the broken dignity of my people. Why not?" Now, after forty-two years of priesthood, oh gosh, if I had the possibility to choose again, whether to be a priest or not, I simply would choose to be a priest. It is a great life. There is so much joy ... so much suffering ... so much pressure ... but such a strong undefeated faith that after all you win because God is there to invite you constantly, "Follow Me."

After six years of study at the Sorbonne and *Institut de Catholique* in Paris, I came back home. In 1965, I was ordained a priest in Nazareth. One week later, my bishop said, "Elias, now you need to have a Parish. So, I decide to send you for one month — just thirty days — one month to Ibillin. It is a village not far away from here. After one month, we will decide your final assignment." I said, "Yes sir." I could not ask questions of such a majestic Bishop, like Bishop Hakim, in those times. I said, "One month, it will go very fast." I did not know then what I know now, even by practice, that Bishops, excuse me, normally have a very short memory. My bishop forgot me there. And I forgot myself. I stayed in that village thirty-eight years waiting for the one month to finish. It would never have ended if the Synod of our Bishops and John Paul II, of blessed memory, did not all but impose on me the honor of accepting the office of Archbishop of Galilee for the largest Catholic Church in Israel. Now while I had the honor of saying, "Yes," I did not know what that meant. If they would ask me now, I would say, "Let me think it over."

When I came to Ibillin, I expected to find a bedroom, an office, a kitchen, at least a toilet. There was none of that. The only place I had to stay was in my Volkswagen Bug that was given to me by a German family. So I lived for six months in the Volkswagen Bug. Don't pity me, please. I don't need pity. It was so comfortable to sleep in the Volkswagen Bug. You know

why? Well, I was a priest, a young priest. I was not so big. I was much smaller. When you become a priest, mainly in the Middle East, you tend to put on weight ... and on and on. I don't know why. But that's the case. It is only by the grace of God that I was able to continue my way.

I started studying what happened to us Palestinians and I realized very intensely that 1948 was a year in which there was a huge operation of ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. Four hundred and sixty Palestinian towns and villages were completely destroyed or obliterated or emptied to prepare space for the coming of Jews from the Arab countries or from Europe or America. I realized that with the creation of Israel, the catastrophe, the plight of the Palestinians started and we became the Jews of the Jews. We became the dispersed people of a nation in the Middle East. We became dispersed into three major groups: those who went to the neighboring Arab countries and became the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt; those who were pushed into the desert; and those who did not want to go as far as the neighboring Arab villages and towns. They said, "we will stay in the territory of Palestine," which was not immediately under Jewish control. This is what you call in your literature today the West Bank that comprises East Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, Jericho, Nablus, Jenin, and so on. That is how these villages, these towns, are surrounded with hundreds of thousands of refugees. The most illustrious example would be Jericho. Jericho is a small village of 25,000 inhabitants, but now with refugees on every side, this comprises 120,000 refugees. Gaza is another example where people were pushed into the desert. Gaza is a piece of the Sinai Desert — full of sand. In 1948 there were 8,500 original inhabitants in Gaza City. Suddenly, it became swollen up, over populated, over crowded that now there are 1,500,000 refugees and 45,000 from the original inhabitants. These refugees did not come from the Arab countries or from Europe. They came from Lod, Jaffa, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and other villages nearby. They came from the four hundred and sixty Palestinian towns and villages that were completely destroyed. These were left in the desert, forbidden to enjoy any human rights. They lived on bread and soup that was distributed by the UNERWA — the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. They were left with one right free to practice. They were left free to make children. And they made many, many children — intelligent, sound, healthy children, but children without any future.

Then, only seventeen years later, a new deprivation was added to their lives by the occupation by Israelis following the Six-Day War. The Israelis introduced to them the military checkpoints. A checkpoint can be in front of your house in the street. If you want to cross the street to go to school on the other side, you have to be there three to four hours ahead of time so that the Jewish soldier would decide either permit you go in or send you back. And when you want to return come back you have also to wait three to four hours before the soldier would decide whether to let you go back in. That created a situation of total despair. Young people no longer have any motivation to live because they would live subjected to this daily humiliation and that's too much. So they decided, many of them, to terminate their lives. Now we have a new phenomenon that of the suicidal bombers.

What do we need to think of suicidal bombers? I don't know what you think, you Americans, but I need to tell you what I think, as a Palestinian. A suicide bomber commits three crimes at the same time: a crime against himself or herself; a crime against God; and a crime against humanity. To condemn suicidal bombing is very easy to understand ... without any nuance. It is clear-cut. But if we just condemn suicidal bombers, we then have done nothing positive. What I say to you about suicide bombings is the same thing that I said to the Israeli Defense Minister Barak when he came to visit. I said, "We have to consider the reasons why this young man or this young woman decided to commit suicide. You have children, Barak?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Would they even think to commit suicide?" He said, "Oh no, God forbid." I said, "What is different between your children and their children. It is this: your children have a future; their children have no future. So when you retaliate against suicidal bombers, destroying their family homes, uprooting their olive trees, or hunting their relatives with Apache helicopters, what are you doing? You are creating schools of suicidal bombers. If you recognize that what they need is some interest to live for in the future, why don't you facilitate that for them." This is what I think of suicide bombers. (And what I say is very dangerous because tomorrow I'll pass through the airport, through the Oregon Airport, to return home.)

There is the third group of the Palestinians who were the poorest among the Palestinian people who could not go as far. They decided to stay in or around their villages and towns. They are like me. Normally they gathered themselves into a few centers that were still populated. Now these people had to be considered Israeli citizens. So now we are 1,300,000 Palestinian Arabs with Israeli citizenship. That means we have Israeli passports, but not in the same way that the Jew has an Israeli passport. I am second-class citizen. He is first-class citizen. On my passport, if anyone wants to see I can show you that, I am 02, while my Jewish friend, whom I helped to graduate from the university, is 01 automatically.

Among the 1,300,000 Palestinian Arabs, there is still a small Christian minority. A small remnant of Christianity is still living in Palestine. We are now 150,000 Palestinian Christians inside Israel. We represent 25% of Palestinian Christians. Where are the other 75%? We find them in the refugee camps with their Muslim brothers and sisters. We find them in exile. And we find them in self-exile. And that is my major concern as an Archbishop, if not to stop, at least to slow down the ongoing massive emigration. These Christians continue to believe in their faith and we are united into different churches. Normally if you speak about that you would say that we are divided into different churches. But we are not divided. We are united into different churches, like brothers who grew up under the same roof, grew up, got married, made their own families, but they still are united. The largest Christian community still in Israel is the Greek Melkite, Greek Catholic community. None among us is Greek. I do know how many are Catholic. We count almost 79,000 Christians. We are spread all over Galilee. I make it a point every year to visit every Parish at least three or four times. The second largest community is the Greek Orthodox and none at all are Greek. I don't know how many are Orthodox. These have a small problem. They have no communication with their hierarchy.

The hierarchy has been always Greek Orthodox and they do not speak the language of their community and that creates very serious problems. The third largest community is the Roman Catholics. We call them the Latins. There are 10,500 to 11,000 Christians. These people I envy publicly. For 11,000 they have one Patriarch, an excellent clergyman, four bishops, hundreds of priests, and only God knows how many nuns they have. I wish to be Catholic like them. If they would give me ten or twenty priests, a hundred nuns, I could make a revolution in Israel. But our community does not want a revolution. We still have hope. The fourth community is the Maronite community ... not the Mennonites ... the Maronites. These are Christians who are originally from Lebanon. These people have a very well educated clergy who are very spiritually motivated and very active pastorally. They are great people. Then we have all kinds of reformed churches such as the Anglican, and you call them here Episcopalians. Can you imagine a Palestinian calling himself, "I am from the church of England. I am an Anglican." I don't know what he has in common with Anglicanism except tea at 4 o'clock. You dig a little bit deeper you find either a Greek Catholic or a Greek Orthodox. But that's it. That's what we inherited. We do not want to make a case about the differences. We want to create unity.

I wish you were with me on that Great Holy Week, when on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Saturday before Easter, we close the city of Haifa. We march together, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Anglicans, Latins. We are almost more than 30,000 people marching for one and a half hours on the streets of Haifa, brandishing the Cross, the Gospel, and Christian symbols and proclaiming, "Hoshanna! Blessed be The One who comes in the name of the Lord!" That was a real resurrection of Christianity for the first time marching openly in the city of Haifa. For us it was a discovery. Goodness, where did we come from? Were we so many and we did not know? Our main plight, my dear brothers and sisters, is the ongoing emigration. People do not want, cannot anymore, to continue living as marginalized, merely tolerated citizens. They want to live their humanity. That is why in the United States you have many more Palestinian Christians than in Palestine itself. Nearby, in the city of Toronto, there are 1,200 Palestinian Christian families. Far away, there in the city of Melbourne, Australia, there are 800 Palestinian Christian families. I am frightened. Am I the Archbishop of people who are on the go, leaving their ancestral country, leaving their memories, their land, their fathers, their forefathers, to become refugees, neglected, abandoned, and marginalized? That is too much. That is why I go all over the world calling people to solidarity.

At least when you go there to the Holy Land — which is a good thing — and you want to visit the Holy Shrines — that's great — you go to the Holy Sepulchre, you feel so nice, so moved, I am in the place where the Body of Christ is. But, please, if you go inside the Holy Sepulchre and you rub your hands on the marble — there is nothing bad with that — but, don't forget these marbles were imported from Italy not long ago. They have nothing to do with the Body of Christ and it is the only place in the world where it is written in the marble, "He is not here." So what are you going to do where he is not? Get out. Not despite the fact that we are Christians, but because of it.

It is because we are Christians that 60% of our students are Muslims ... all beautiful boys and girls. Some of these Muslim girls, very few, have their heads covered. The majority do not have their heads covered. Few Muslim girls have even no head on their shoulders. I have to fix a head. They are as shallow as our Christian or Jewish girls. Do you know why they are beautiful? It is because Muslim girls and boys were also created in the image and with the likeness of God with the freedom of choice. We forget that very often. We label people. Once the Jews were dirty; now the Palestinians are dirty. Why? Is it because we need someone to accuse? Now please, give up collective labeling of people. Jews were not dirty and Palestinians are not terrorists. They are terrorized. I try to see what is coming between my Muslim, Christian, and Jewish students ... we have eighty-two Jewish kids. I know that they have something in common, believe me, because I greet everyone by hand in the morning. Every one of them has two eyes, two ears, one mouth. Some have two or three mouths; they speak uninterruptedly. My test is to shut down the extra mouth because all of them are kids before they became Jews, Christian or Muslim.

I will tell you a story. I have gone on too long, I think, but please excuse me. I travelled 16,000 miles to be with you. In 1986, we had only one building for 350 children and we had just over 700 children. I needed to add one more building, a gym with workshops and classrooms. I submitted our drawing. They said, "It is perfect. This time you will have your building permit, but mind you, Father Chacour, our bureaucracy is sooo slooow." I understood that the decision would be a political one. I started the construction letting them be busy with their sooo slooow progress. One year later the police came and told us stop and I was back to court. We stopped building. We started digging an underground room. It's like a fairy tale. When you come, ask to see these rooms — underground in the rock. At the same time, I started to knock on the doors of every Israeli official. "Please help us to have the building permit. We are citizens. We don't hate Israel. We love the Jews. We hate what they do to us." Nobody refused to listen to me, but no one moved a finger to help. I started understanding we are no more in the Promised Land, we are simply in the Land of Promises — empty promises.

After six years, I was filled with despair. I said okay, I will take the big risk to reach that goal, the building permit for a gymnasium. I realized that the shortest way to Jerusalem passes through Washington, D.C. I bought a flight ticket and landed at National Airport. This is one of the rare airports in the world, which is not in the neighborhood of the city. It is in the center of the city. I took a car and drove to Foxhall Road, number 17. That was the residence of your former Secretary of State, James Baker. I decided to pop into his residence without any previous notice simply because I knew that President Bush (President George H.W. Bush) had a problem. President Bush wanted to install extra security measures around the residences of officials and James Baker refused any extra security measure around his home. He said to me later, "I wanted to be as exposed as any American citizen." That's why I decided to pop into his residence. I parked the car and went right to the entrance door. I knocked. He was not there. His wife, Susan Baker, bless her heart, came herself to open the door. That was already abnor-

mal. A wife of the Secretary of State never opened the door herself, but she was expecting some more American ladies. She opened the door and here I am. I am not a lady. I don't look like a lady. I am not American. I am frightening. She was shocked and she said, "Who are you." I said, "Madam, I am another man from Galilee." Not everyone can say that. And she said, "Do you have an appointment with us?" And I said, "Madam, we men from Galilee; we never make appointments, we make appearances." Poor Susan! She later told me how confused she felt. She did not want to let me in and she could not kick me out. She invited me — not into the living room where there was noise — but to the kitchen. They have a huge kitchen. I could spend all my life in it. She gave me something to drink — a drink that I never liked — a glass of iced tea. How can you drink that? I don't know. But I did not like it. I just swallowed it in a minute while she was saying, "I am sorry, I have to let you go." And I was already at the exit door. She said, "I am busy; I am having a Bible study hour with twenty American ladies." I said, "Lady, what kind of Bible study hour?" She said, "We are having a look at the Sermon on the Mount." I said, "I pity you; good luck." She said, "Why do you pity me?" I said, "What can you understand from that sermon. It was not written by an American, it was written by a peasant next door to my village and he did not write it in your American slang. He wrote it in one of my Semitic languages. Good luck Madam." I still hear Susan say, "I see. Can you help us understand it better?" My God. What could I expect more than that! I was reintroduced, this time in the living room, with the twenty American ladies. It took me two hours to explain to these ladies what the first eight verses of the Sermon on the Mount mean. (You Americans call them sometimes the Blessings, some other times the Beatitudes, and when you want to be extravagant, you call them the Be Happy Attitudes.) Two hours. That is a long, long, operation. I left my books to the Bakers and went back home after begging these ladies to go convince their husbands to get their hands dirty for peace and justice to the Jews and to the Palestinians. At least two of their fingers would be enough to bring peace and justice. I went back home.

One week later, the telephone rang in my office. It was Susan Baker. She said, "Father Chacour, can we pray together?" What do you think? Why not? We prayed together. It was strange for me. It was the first time I saw myself speaking to Almighty God on the telephone. We never do that back home. We speak directly with him. In America, I do like Americans do. This operation repeated itself more than twice every month. More than once, a third person interrupted saying, "Now my time to pray." This was your Secretary of State — James Baker. After three months, I became their beloved *Abuna*, their beloved priest. I think I could ask them anything I wanted and they would not refuse. So I called Susan Baker, "Susan, please write a letter to Premier Shamir encouraging him to give us a building permit. I am in deep trouble." "*Abuna*," she said, "I will write that letter today." And she wrote a two page typed letter. When her husband came back in the evening she showed him the letter. "Oh darling, you will not send that. It might create a diplomatic crisis between the United States and Israel. Israel does not care. We care far too much." It was 1991, after Gulf War I, with this very diffi-

cult coalition he was able to build with 160 countries and he did not want to see that disintegrating. But, after awhile, he went to Susan and said, "You know, sign this letter. I will sign this with you. I will take two copies to *Abuna* and hand-deliver them to Shamir, the Prime Minister of Israel. I promise you Susan, I will not leave his office before I get the written promise. In a week, Abuna will have his permit." This is how we got the building permit, ladies and gentlemen.

I could continue on and on and on how Secretary Baker did come and visit the school one-half year later saying, "I am not coming to visit you, Father Chacour. We see each other in Washington. I am coming to make an act of solidarity with our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters to tell them we would like to see them stay in their homes and their villages." That provoked even the Israeli Foreign Ministry to call me six months after that visit, saying, "Our Foreign Minister was given the Nobel Peace Prize and he has decided to give his first lecture on peace and justice in your institution. Do you agree Father Chacour?" What do you think? Not only did I agree but I invited 1,800 Palestinian personalities from all over Galilee to listen to Shimon Peres speaking of his conception of peace and justice. People were in the hall and the gym, and I welcomed the Foreign Minister. I was walking him into the gym, while telling him the story of that gym. After a few minutes, he said, "Father Chacour, please stop. I don't want to hear anything more because I am not coming so much to speak about peace and justice as much as to see the reason that James Baker, did in fact, raise hell over in Israel." Ladies and gentlemen, whenever you can raise hell, do not hesitate. Do not hesitate. To go on is very easy. I am raising hell for you.

Why do I share with you all these stories? For two reasons. One, because I believe in everyone of you. Everyone is able to make a difference for the best, for the better. You have made a historical act in this country. Goodness, didn't you choose a person whose family has roots in Africa to become your President? That is great, that is history. You can make a difference. I am calling you to make the difference again. I do not mean to put down Obama. No. But I ask you to make a difference. The second reason why I accepted to come here to speak, to take more time than was given to me, it is because of who I am. I am very well known as an international beggar. If I came here, it is to beg. Please give me a favor. Give me your generosity. If you give me generosity, I might be able to stop hostility between the Jew and the Palestinian. I need your help in order to continue building peace and justice in that land that has no peace because it has no justice. I need your help. I am an international beggar, but I never beg for money. So don't start counting the dollars you might or might not give me. I know the importance of money. I am very grateful for the help of the Pilgrims of Ibillin without whose help, we cannot operate. The Kingdom of God cannot be built on just spirituality and water. It needs acts. I know the importance of money, but I am the last to beg for money.

I am begging for two things: for friendship, which should be easy to give because it is friendship, it has no definition, and for solidarity, which is much more difficult to provide because it requires a change of attitude, a change of conviction. What kind of solidarity? Very

simple. You are here in Portland. I hope you have a good Jewish community here. If you have Jewish friends, even Jews who might be very fanatical Jews, Jews who might be supporters of the settlers who dream day and night how to get rid of the physical existence of Palestinians. If these are your Jewish friends, please, I beg you, for God's sake, continue providing them with friendship. Give them more friendship than ever. Give them all the riches of the United States. The more you give them, the more I will be grateful. Stand with them. But, solidarity requires that you stop interpreting your friendship with the Jews as an automatic hatred against the Palestinians. You don't know us. You do not know what we have become. We are the Jews of the Jews. We inherited the label "dirty Jews" who became the "dirty Palestinians." We have been treated for sixty years as a nation of terrorists, when, in fact, we are a terrorized nation and that is why if you have read my books, or other books, if you visited some Palestinians, if you were in the refugees' camps, you know how thoroughly we suffer deprivation. If you realize that we — the Palestinians — are paying the bill for what others have done against our Jewish brothers and sisters in the Holocaust and Auschwitz and elsewhere and you decided to take our side, we Palestinians, gosh, we say, Bless your heart. Take our side. Not only is it not bad, for once you would be on the right side. But, American people, if in taking our side, the side of the Palestinians, would mean for you to accept everything we do, good as well as bad, then that would be to be one-sided with us and against the Jews. If that is your friendship, we do not need it. Keep it for yourself. What do you do when you become one-sided against Israel? You become one more enemy in that very complicated conflict and we do not need any more enemies. We need one more common friend. Can you be that? Come forth please. If you cannot, keep sitting where you are in peace, rather to come forth to reduce us into pieces.

The last thought I will give you: I am convinced that we Jews and Palestinians do not need to learn how to live together. We rather need to remember how we use to live together for centuries and centuries, and, then, these past sixty-two years must be put in parentheses, an exception to norm. Thank you for your patience.

MIRACLES IN AUSCHWITZ

WORDS AND ART AS KADDISH



BY ALICE LOK CAHANA

I want to tell you stories of the miracles that happened in Auschwitz ... and stories of the people who despised the Nazis and how they turned away from despising.

Here is one story. I met a man in Israel who told me: I was fourteen years old when the Nazis came into my house, and we had prayer exactly at that moment, and my father said: Take the Torah and put it around your body and go out from the room. And the boy went and did exactly what his father said. And he arrived to Auschwitz. In Auschwitz, first they undress you, he went up to one of the Polish people and he said, I cannot undress, I am carrying a Torah, the Torah is the most sacred book we have. The Polish man got scared and he went around saying the boy has a Torah on him, we cannot let him into the crematorium. Soon everyone surrounded the young man. They said to him, you cannot undress; pretend that you are finding some work in the clothing. Because people undress, they left their clothes on the ground, and then into the crematorium they go. The young SS soldier who was waiting outside the crematorium, he said to them, you must tell me what you are hiding, because all of you will die anyhow. And the young SS soldier found out that this little boy was carrying a Torah, and he went to the boy and said: Listen, I know what you are doing. Listen, every morning you come to me I will help you get food and you don't go to work. And guess what happened? This young man survived and the Torah survived, and it is in Jerusalem. The moment I heard that story I decided to create scrolls. I don't know how to do it but I want to celebrate the scrolls. The sanctity has to go with us no matter where we are. And so I made scrolls, and each one has a name, and I made one with that boy's name.

Here is another story. When I was in Auschwitz, I kept asking, why am I here, what did I do wrong? What did my grandfather do wrong? What did my father do wrong? And I decided I knew what we did wrong: *We read the letters backwards, that was our mistake.* The letters that always revived me! They killed us because we read the letters backwards! But after Auschwitz, when I read the Torah, the letters revive me again and again, so that could not be it. That could not be. And a young American man, he put me in the right knowledge. You didn't do nothing wrong, he said, the world did something wrong, terribly wrong. This young man, he went to Budapest in the beginning of it all, and he saved Jews, he gave out passports of Sweden, and because the Hungarians didn't know how to read Swedish, this was how my father was saved. And thousands of others, too, were saved with these pieces of paper. I am here to tell you that one man can make a difference, and that man can be you, any of you. Your task is to better the world.

I made a painting that has holes in it. Why is there holes? Because God says to us, I cannot do all. I can create you, but I cannot do it all. You have to help Me fix the holes and put everything together. This is the learning from the Holocaust. That each of us is here to fix the holes.

My little brother, they put him in the crematorium. What did my mother, undressing in front of strangers, holding this little boy by the hand, what did she say to him? What? No one knows. There is a hole.

You know everything was terrible in Auschwitz. There was no food, there was no water, there was cold, you didn't know whether your father or mother lives. I worked in a factory in Auschwitz. One day in the factory, it was almost Christmas, and the snow that fell was like a table set for guests, it was so beautiful, it was so white. And of course we had to work inside, starting at five o'clock in the morning and finishing at five o'clock at night, and not having food or anything we need. The foreman watching us every minute making sure we are making every ammunition supposed to be made. And the foreman looked at me and called me over. I was sure I was to be punished because all the way walking there the SS man is whipping his whip. You don't work fast and you don't do the work like it is supposed to, they beat you. I was fifteen years old and my legs are shaking. I am trying to tell him please just don't hurt me. Please I will work faster. And the foreman says bend down bend down bend down and I feel that he is about to be beating me he says take that white bread, put it under your coat, and go out fast. That was my Christmas. What an incredible man. The SS man was behind him. He bet his life to give a child a chance. You know what a slice of white bread meant? Could you imagine that I am starving? Instead of beating me he gave me bread I could share with my sister. So you see, everywhere there are good people, everywhere.

I don't know how much you know about the Holocaust. What is your interest in it? What do you want to do with your life, where do you want to go? What is hurting in you? What are your holes to fix? What is now important in my life, and in your life also, is that after the Holocaust, we shaking hands with each other, that we are nobody lesser than the other. That we understand the real meaning of what God created us for. You have the task. You have the task to better this world. There are holes in people also but those we create and we can fix with love. God wants us whole. We should fix the hole and make a good human being. Use all of your hands. One time I gave a painting to the Pope, Pope Benedict XVI. He said to me *come, come!* and he held my hands. I tell him the painting is us arriving to Auschwitz, we were so frightened, and the first thing they did, they took away your name, so that you are not a person, you are a number. When you don't have name, you are nobody. The Pope asks why is yellow in the painting and I tell him that is the yellow stain, that is the odor in Auschwitz, that odor never left me. That wonderful man had tears in his eyes. He held my hands for nineteen minutes. Then they put my painting by the Sistine Chapel.

My grandfather was a wonderful person and he said about the Nazis, it cannot happen in Hungary, maybe in Poland, maybe they didn't know, maybe, maybe, maybe, and we had all kind of maybes, you understand, and we didn't want to believe. Because just like you are sitting here, you would not believe. What, Germany? Germany is wonderful, they wouldn't do that. When I arrive to Auschwitz, I say to my sister, you know, somebody made a mistake. Very soon they will come and apologize. Somebody will apologize; we don't belong here.

People running around in pajamas, what is this? Insane asylum, what is this? It cannot happen. We did not believe like you would not believe, you would not believe that it can happen in your town. We didn't believe. And unfortunately because we didn't believe, this is where we got.

In Auschwitz, there are a thousand people in a barrack, can you imagine that? In the barrack there is a bunk and six people are on it, nothing, no pillow, no cover, no nothing. Just one little piece of cloth, and if any of us wanted to turn on our side, the others had to turn to that side also. It was so cold, unbelievably cold. In the beginning, you know what I did? I gave away my bread. I say, I will not eat this, this is terrible bread! I got shiny brown shoes on me then, and somebody said they give sometimes a little margarine here, I said, margarine? We never had margarine, we ate butter, you know. And I put the margarine on my shoes, until I realize this is our food. So you slowly adapted yourself to something so horrendous that you cannot believe the human being can be like that, or do that to each other. So this is what we have to do, beautiful people, this is what we have to do: not to hate, not to hate, not ever.

Now you cannot imagine what it means to go out to freedom after Auschwitz. How do you go to freedom? How should I enter freedom? I did not even have a dress. I was sent to Sweden and someone invited me to Passover. Someone gave me a blue dress. I went to the door and I could not enter. I walked around in the flowers. Finally I went and opened the door, and it was beautiful halls and beautiful tables and people, you know, and the lady who invited me, she says, there is a little room there, why don't you just go and change? Ha, I didn't have anything to change into! But I went to the little room and saw a calendar on the wall and I said to myself, I will learn the days in English, and so I learned all the days until all the guests arrived. Finally everybody sat down, and they started to talk, and guess what they talked about ... the price of the gold on the international market. And I thought, my god, this is how you celebrate the Passover? You know how many people were put in the crematorium a day? So very quietly I took my coat and walked down into Stockholm until I had no tears. I thought, what will I do with my freedom? Will I be quiet or will I scream? But it cannot happen again! At that time, I decided, I will *not* be silent. But of course my art is very silent, because some of the things you want to say, words are not enough, and only the art can talk.

I was very embarrassed what I did, very embarrassed. I thought if my mother would be alive she would never permit me to get up from any table and leave the house. And when I met my husband I said I have only one wish, take me back to Sweden so I can apologize this family for being so rude and leaving them, and my husband said, I do it for you. We went to Sweden back and I went to the same house and the lady say to me, I don't remember you. And my husband holding the flowers and I'm crying. So life is very interesting; because you cannot expect everything. I had the task to tell you my story, and now I am eighty years old and it's very hard, because I am crying every day. Where is my brother, where is my mother, what happened to them? And so I have the task, nobody else. I have the task, no matter how hard it is, to come here, and tell you my story.

I will tell you one more story: Steven Spielberg in his film [*The Last Days*] about five of us

who survived, did something colossal for me. I told him I will do what he asked me to do, go back to Auschwitz, but he has to do me one thing, he has to help my find my sister, this is fifty-six years after she dies. And guess what happens? The German person who was in charge of who died and who was alive opened the books, and here is my sister's name — Edith. And so after fifty-six years, I found my sister. My husband and I put down a stone for her and there she is under a tree and leaves cover the tree.

You know why I give the Pope the painting? Because the first thing he did, when he became a Pope, he went to Auschwitz and he kneeled and prayed and asked how could this happen? When I read that in the paper I thought to myself, this is it, I have to thank him somehow, because after all these years he could easily do nothing and be quiet. But he didn't.

How did I deal with God in Auschwitz? This is a very strange story. My sister Edith and I decided that we would pray every Friday for the Sabbath. But they didn't let us pray, they didn't let us speak. We had to be quiet. We had to be nothing. So one Friday night I say, why don't we pray inside the latrine? So we went to a corner in the latrine and started to pray, and the Hebrew songs, you know, are almost universal, and more children came, from all over the world it was people there, and the children heard us praying in Hebrew and singing, and for a moment, a moment, God was with us there, and we all prayed, and every week, more and more people prayed. We discovered that the SS would not go into this filthy place. So this is where we prayed. And it is also very beautiful thing of Steven Spielberg, when I went back to Auschwitz, I saw the latrine still there, and I started to scream, and he says what are you talking about? So I told him the story, and he got some Jewish boys to sing the same songs in the latrine, if you listen carefully you will hear them, young children singing. The song they sang means, *Angels who come here, bless these children, bless them and bless the world.*

Here is one more story. When they took us from our home they put us in a cattle train and there was two buckets there, one with water for drinking and the other for sanitary use. There were eighty people in the train, men and women and a woman who was pregnant. Edith and I could not bear to use the bucket in the corner. So when we got to the border there was a young soldier who opened the door for fresh air. I said to him, please, please let me go down for a minute under the wheels, my sister and I cannot bear to going to the bathroom in the bucket. And he understood and let me down. Wasn't it a miracle?

Alice Lok Cahana was imprisoned in Auschwitz as a teenager. She survived. Part of her journey was recorded by Steven Spielberg in his work — *The Last Days*; part of her work is chronicled here; but the major part of her life is told in her living as artist, wife, mother to two sons who are Rabbis and a daughter — who lights up her life.

SECTION 2
REMEMBERING THE RESPONSE
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE VATICAN AND THE UNITED STATES

RAPPROCHEMENT IN

TIME OF WAR



BY GERALD P. FOGARTY, S. J.

The opening of the Vatican archives for the pontificate of Pius XI, i.e. up to February, 1939, casts new light on the attitude of Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pius XII, in his role as Vatican Secretary of State during the 1930s. These newly available documents reveal the Vatican's changing attitude toward the United States. Earlier in his career as Papal Nuncio to Bavaria, he had reservations about the republic across the ocean and its anti-Catholic President, Woodrow Wilson. In the fall of 1918, after the abdication of the Kaiser, the new German government dealt exclusively with the American President. This prompted Pacelli to write to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, then Secretary of State, "[O]n this occasion I cannot hide from Your Eminence my sadness in seeing Germany turning directly to the President of the United States, rather than having had recourse to the good offices of the Holy Father." Many German leaders, including some Protestants, wanted papal mediation.¹ The role of the United States in European affairs, however, became a moot point as it retreated into isolationism. To a large extent, the nation, with its religious pluralism, remained a mystery to the Holy See. To judge by the diplomatic files in the National Archives, the United States, for its part, was indifferent toward the Holy See. That would change for both parties with the rise of Fascism and National Socialism. This paper will focus on three general areas: 1) Pacelli's growing appreciation for the United States; 2) the Vatican and American mutual concern for events in Germany in the late 1930s; and 3) an overview of the relationship between the Vatican and the United States during the war.

I. Pacelli's growing appreciation for the United States.

In 1929, when the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy signed the Lateran treaties, including a concordat, an agreement guaranteeing rights of the Church, ending the "Roman Question," and establishing Vatican City State as the tiny sovereign territory to guarantee the spiritual sovereignty of the pope, Vatican diplomacy entered a new era, under a new secretary of state, Pacelli, who replaced his old mentor, Cardinal Gasparri. He had the task of carving out a new form of papal diplomacy. Yet, the end of the Roman Question did not mean complete detente between the Kingdom of Italy and the Holy See. In 1931, the Fascist government had basically shut down the Catholic press and violated the concordat. Pius XI issued an encyclical, *Non abbiamo bisogno*, condemning the actions, but could not publish it in Italy. Pacelli chose a rising American official at the Secretariat of State, Francis J. Spellman, a priest of Boston, to smuggle the encyclical out to be published in Paris by the Associated Press and United Press International. Pacelli had befriended Spellman, who had been working at the Vatican since 1925, and probably chose him for the mission because the Fascist authorities would be loath to stop an American

citizen — the Vatican archives unfortunately do not give Pacelli's motives.

Whatever were Pacelli's motives in choosing Spellman for this mission, it was apparent that the Cardinal wanted closer relations with the United States. In the fall of 1932, he had Spellman named auxiliary bishop of Boston, whose ordinary, Cardinal William H. O'Connell, had not asked for an auxiliary. Part of Spellman's assignment was to make contact with whoever won the presidential election that year. Joseph P. Kennedy became his intermediary with Roosevelt. In the meantime, Pacelli was developing another channel to the President. In March, 1933, shortly after Roosevelt's inauguration, Archbishop Amleto Cicognani became the apostolic delegate. In June, he described for Pacelli the warm reception he received in the White House from the President who expressed the hope of soon welcoming him as an ambassador. A short time later, Roosevelt received an honorary degree from the Catholic University of America.² The Vatican and the United States were paving the way for future relations.

However, the road to closer relations between the two entities encountered numerous bumps, including anti-Catholic feeling. On October 4, Roosevelt addressed the annual Catholic Charities dinner in New York. He informed Cardinal Patrick Hayes of New York that he was about to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Roosevelt then dispatched his son James and daughter-in-law, Betsey Cushing Roosevelt, with an entourage, to see the Pope. The meeting was arranged through Pacelli, and included in the entourage was Rose Kennedy, the wife of Joseph Kennedy. Enrico Galeazzi, a confidante of Pacelli, a friend of Spellman, and the Roman agent for the Knights of Columbus, presented them to the Pope. Afterward, Galeazzi paid the Americans a visit. He stated that the Vatican stood by the position it had adopted at the time of the Genoa conference in 1922. Surprisingly that position called for freedom of all religions in the Soviet Union, and not just Catholicism, to own churches and practice openly.³ This position was far more open, if strictly pragmatic, than that of the American bishops. Moreover, this Roman meeting was the first recorded contact between Galeazzi and the Kennedy family.

The fall of 1933 was a turning point for Vatican diplomacy. In September, the concordat between Germany and the Holy See was ratified. Pius XI remarked at the time that he would conclude a concordat with the devil if it would guarantee the rights of the Church. Even as the Pope was receiving James Roosevelt, however, the German government began violating the concordat. William Dodd, the United States ambassador to Germany, had been skeptical about the concordat as early as September and, by January, 1934, was reporting to Secretary of State Cordell Hull of the violations of the concordat and arrest of priests.⁴ Tensions with Germany, in spite of the concordat, stood in marked contrast with the increasingly cordial relations with the United States. What was left was for Pacelli to go and see with his own eyes.

Early in August, 1936, Spellman received a phone call from Genevieve Garvin Brady, a papal duchess and widow of Nicholas Brady, a prominent financier. Spellman had befriended the Bradys during his stay in Rome. Mrs. Brady informed Spellman that Cardinal Pacelli was coming to the United States as her house guest at her estate of Innisfada on Long Island.

Spellman immediately intervened and received the assurance from Galeazzi that the Cardinal would follow his lead. Late in September, Spellman visited Cicognani in Washington to complain about Father Charles Coughlin's increasing invective against Roosevelt, but the delegate said he could do nothing. Spellman did not say anything about Pacelli's forthcoming visit, but, the next day, Spellman did visit Roosevelt at Hyde Park, New York. They discussed Coughlin, and Spellman told the President of the Cardinal's visit.⁵

By September 30, Pacelli's visit was made public. For the next week, Spellman alienated Cardinal Hayes, Cicognani, and Mrs. Brady, although he may have been following Pacelli's orders, for the trip had as its purpose more than being Mrs. Brady's house guest. On October 7, Pacelli, accompanied by Galeazzi, arrived in New York. Despite the tension, Spellman was Pacelli's constant travelling companion, first on visits to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington and then on a chartered plane for an extended tour of the country that included stops in Chicago, St. Paul, San Francisco, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and Cincinnati. In an interview thirty years later, Coughlin claimed his bishop, Michael Gallagher of Detroit was turned away when he tried to see Pacelli in Cincinnati, but Spellman made no reference to this. Gallagher, moreover, had been in Rome during the summer and had a rather heated meeting with Pius XI.⁶ There is, therefore, some doubt that Gallagher would have even attempted to see Pacelli on this side of the ocean.

The high point of Pacelli's trip, however, was meeting President Roosevelt. The difficulty in protocol was to arrange a meeting between the American head of state and the Vatican foreign minister when there were no diplomatic relations between the two. As soon as he learned of Pacelli's coming, Cicognani sought the assistance of Father John Burke, secretary general of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), the bishops' conference, to arrange a meeting at the White House. Burke had just about completed the arrangements when Cicognani summoned him to report that Pacelli would meet Roosevelt, not in Washington, but at his mother's home in Hyde Park. He angrily told Burke he was sure Spellman was behind the arrangement, which Burke took to be a snub of the apostolic delegate and the officially recognized bishops' conference. It was one more bone of contention between Spellman and Cicognani. Spellman had in fact arranged the meeting through Kennedy. Pacelli received the President's formal invitation on October 25, the day he began his cross-country flight. They met at Hyde Park on November 5, two days after the presidential election. While there were no reporters or photographers present for the meeting that consisted of the President, the Cardinal, Kennedy, and Spellman, what Spellman later implied in his diary and what Pacelli later wrote to Kennedy about Cardinal Innitzer, as will be seen, indicate that diplomatic relations was the principal topic of their conversation.⁷ That episode is illustrative of Pacelli's attitude toward Hitler.

In the meantime, Pacelli returned to Rome. At a dinner party the following May, arranged by William Babbington Macauley, Irish minister to the Holy See, who had married Mrs. Brady, William Phillips, United States ambassador to Italy, met Pacelli. Phillips recorded his impres-

sions in his diary:

[H]e referred enthusiastically to his recent trip to the United States during which he flew to and from California, and also to his visit to the President at Hyde Park immediately following the elections, but he talked mostly about his difficulties with Germany. He mentioned that these were growing worse every day and he foresaw the time before long when the entire German people would become 'pagans.' He used the word 'pagan' frequently. He seemed convinced that the German youth was being so thoroughly drilled in paganism that even after reaching mature age and old age they would still remain without belief in Christian idea. He felt this was a great tragedy for the whole world. He mentioned that Mussolini had tried his best to keep Hitler within reasonable bounds in this respect but had failed completely. Pacelli has great personal charm and is a man of force and character with high spiritual qualities, an ideal man for Pope if he can be elected.⁸

The situation of the Church in Germany stood in stark contrast to the Church in the United States.

II. American and Vatican Actions in regard to the German Government.

Upon Pacelli's return from the United States, he found the situation in Germany had worsened. Early in January, 1937, a delegation of German bishops came to Rome to confer with Pacelli. The group consisted of Cardinals Adolf Bertram of Breslau, Michael Faulhaber of Munich, Karl Joseph Schulte of Cologne and Bishops Konrad von Preysing of Berlin and Clemens August von Galen of Münster. Faulhaber had prepared a draft of a strong statement against National Socialism. Pacelli and the five German prelates then revised the draft and, on January 17, presented it to the Pope, whose serious illness had prevented him from taking part in the discussions. Pacelli's comments on the draft are easily identifiable, since he had a distinctive, minuscule handwriting.⁹ On March 14, 1937, Pius XI issued *Mit brennender Sorge* condemning the abuses of Nazism. Because the Nazis had shut down the Catholic presses, the encyclical had to be read from all the pulpits of Catholic churches on Palm Sunday. The German government arrested those found in possession of the encyclical, and the police said it was an act of "high treason."¹⁰ William Dodd, the American ambassador, praised the boldness of the Pope's letter to Archbishop Cesare Orsenigo, the Nuncio, but expressed strong reservations to Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State. The encyclical, he stated, "had helped the Catholic Church in Germany very little but on the contrary has provoked the Nazi state, without proceeding to an open break, to continue its oblique assault upon Catholic institutions." He went on to tell how Catholic schools were forbidden from taking in any more students.¹¹

One way the German government stifled Catholic education was by holding morality trials of the priests and brothers teaching in Catholic schools. Although Catholics in 2010 might understandably be ready to believe such charges of immorality, Preysing of Berlin noted that less than one percent had been charged. Nonetheless the Nazi press was calling for all Catholic schools to be placed under the direct supervision of the government.¹² In Chicago, the archbishop, Cardinal George Mundelein, Brooklyn-born but of German ancestry, had been informed of the situation by the German-based sisters who staffed his residence. On

May 18, he had a conference of his clergy. Angered by an article in the *New York Times* about the morality trials, he made this the topic of his presentation. In his speech he queried how 60 million intelligent people could accept a foreigner as their leader, “an Austrian paper hanger” and “a poor one at that.” He went on to criticize Goebbels and Goering. A “paper hanger,” at the time was a term of opprobrium for someone who regarded himself to be an artist, but simply reproduced scenes — Hitler had been rejected from a Viennese art school.

Pacelli in Rome immediately cabled Cicognani for a full text of the “courageous address” of Mundelein.¹³ Cicognani responded with a report of the almost unanimous support of Mundelein’s speech from the American press and from Protestant and Jewish groups.¹⁴ Cicognani further defended Mundelein by saying that the address was not intended for the public, but that through a “fortunate indiscretion” it had gained much publicity. Mundelein admitted that, had he known it would become public, he would perhaps have omitted direct references to Hitler and other German leaders.¹⁵ Yet, there is no evidence that this statement was due to any type of admonition from Rome or from Cicognani. Rumors that Pacelli was annoyed that Mundelein mentioned a head of state seem unfounded in light of the Roman cardinal’s initial response quoted above.

On May 24, Diego von Bergen, the German ambassador to the Holy See, met with Pacelli and protested Mundelein’s speech. He was then recalled to Berlin. A few days later, Fritz Menshausen, the German Chargé d’Affaires, submitted a more formal protest. He argued that by remaining silent, the Holy See was countenancing what Mundelein had said, for it was a well known fact that the Holy See controlled what cardinals said.¹⁶ The German government now blamed the Vatican for the lack of normal relations between the two entities. On June 20, Pacelli presided over a session of the cardinals of the section for foreign affairs. First of all, he submitted a draft of a response to Menshausen’s protest. It focused primarily on the German attacks on the Church, including the morality trials. Only secondarily did it address the question of Mundelein.

One of the most interesting opinions was that of Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, former delegate to the United States and then Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. He supported Pacelli’s draft response and argued that, if any other citizen of the United States had spoken in that manner, there would be tension between Berlin and Washington, not Berlin and the Holy See. Furthermore, he argued, Mundelein was not a functionary or representative of the Holy See, as a nuncio or delegate was, and had the complete right to exercise his freedom of speech.¹⁷ Here the matter ended as far as the Holy See was concerned. The German government had, in fact, made no demands on the United States government, but the German Chargé d’Affaires had visited James Clement Dunn, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Europe, with a copy of a newspaper folded so that the story of Mundelein appeared.¹⁸

The German government seems to have seized on the Mundelein affair as an occasion to demand further limitations on Church activities. Behind the mentality of the government, moreover, was the ancient issue of whether the state or church had jurisdiction over religious

matters. In terms of Catholic relations with the American government, however, Mundelein's speech served to solidify his warm relationship with Roosevelt and became a beacon for German-American support of the United States. In Germany, however, the government organized rallies against Mundelein and suggested that some German bishops were responsible for the statement. Relations between Germany and the Holy See, in the meantime, worsened with the *Anschluss*.

From the time he took office, Hitler had aspirations of creating an empire of Germanic people. His first annexation would be Austria, the country of his birth. Early in February, 1938, Hitler met with Kurt von Schuschnigg, Chancellor of Austria, and demanded, among other things, the release from prison of members of the Austrian National Socialist Party. Even before that meeting, the American Chargé d'Affaires in Vienna, John C. Wiley, reported to the State Department at length on the situation of the Austrian Church. He had had a long interview with Dietrich von Hildebrand, a professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna. Born in Florence, Hildebrand had taught at the University of Munich until the Nazis took power, when he was forced to flee. In Vienna, he had founded the weekly *Christliche Ständestaat* that "preaches the independence of the Church and discreetly attacks National Socialism and anti-Semitism," and was founded at the insistence of former Chancellor Dollfuss. Hildebrand characterized Cardinal Theodore Innitzer, the Archbishop of Vienna, as "both good and honest," but was "essentially weak and was inclined to listen to the last one who gave him counsel." As a result, the Cardinal's "attitude was continually vacillating and his influence largely negative." He also said that the Cardinal was not on good terms with Schuschnigg and that "there was also some friction between him and the Nuncio," Archbishop Gaetano Cicognani. "Another unfortunate factor," continued Wiley, Innitzer "was a Sudeten German." Wiley also spoke of Hildebrand's close friendship with Friedrich Muckermann, S.J., whom Hildebrand described as "the outstanding exponent of resistance to National Socialism, and one of the very few who attempt vigorously to combat anti-Semitism . . . the strong ally in Austria of National Socialism," an assessment with which Wiley agreed. In his conclusion, Wiley reiterated that Hildebrand asserted that the attitude of Cicognani toward Innitzer was "clearly one of disapproval."¹⁹ In the next few weeks, Hildebrand's information would prove surprisingly accurate. After the *Anschluss*, incidentally, Hildebrand fled Austria and eventually went to New York in 1950, where he taught at Fordham University for the rest of his academic career. Archbishop Gaetano Cicognani would continue to play a large part in Vatican-American relations partly because of his brother, Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, the apostolic delegate to the United States hierarchy.

On March 12, 1938, the German army crossed the border into Austria. The next day Hitler announced that on April 10, the Austrian people would hold a plebiscite to accept or reject the *Anschluss*. On March 14, Wiley reported the arrest of many priests. He also said Cicognani had been unable to contact the Foreign Office.²⁰ A few days later, he noted that the Nuncio "considers the situation of the church in Austria bad and that of 'non-Aryans' utterly hope-

less.”²¹ The tension between Innitzer and Cicognani now became more open. On March 27, the Austrian bishops issued a declaration to be read in all the churches calling for Catholics to vote for the *Anschluss*. In an introduction, they stated that they acted in this way, “in the realization that the thousand-year old longing for the unification of the German people has been fulfilled” and in accordance with the promise of Joseph Buerckel, the supervisor of the plebiscite, to respect the rights of the Church — he cited the Gospel passage “Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s and to God that which is God’s.” The declaration itself said “we joyfully recognize that the National Socialist movement has produced pre-eminent accomplishments toward the national and economic reconstruction as well as the social welfare of the German Reich and people, particularly for the poorer classes.” The bishops also believed that National Socialism would “avert the danger of atheistic and destructive communism.” The correspondent for the *New York Times*, Emil Vadnay, thought that this “conciliatory attitude” was due to the bishops’ trying to contain Nazism and to prevent what was happening in Germany from developing in Austria. He also noted that Innitzer was a Sudeten German and had strong pan-German leanings.²² The next day, Innitzer went further. He concluded his letter to Buerckel with the German salute “Heil Hitler.”²³

On April 2, Wiley informed Hull that the Nuncio had been to see him and that,

He was in a state of acute distress. He deplored Cardinal Innitzer’s weakness and told me that he had proceeded without advice or consultation; from which I can only infer that neither the Vatican nor the Nuncio were acquainted with his plans. The Nuncio stated further that the Cardinal had undermined the position of the Church in Germany, which has so courageously fought National Socialism for years, and he regretted particularly the fact that the Church in Austria had voluntarily renounced its authority without anything in compensation, not even the possibility of serving humanitarian ends. (The Nuncio has attached the greatest importance to the question of obtaining the release of Dr. von Schuschnigg, ex-Bürgermeister Schmitz and other prominent Catholics who are in custody.) The Nuncio would have welcomed the attitude of the Cardinal if it had been designed to bring about peace between the Vatican and National Socialism. This, he knew, would not be the case. The Church in Austria after the plebiscite on April 10th would be reduced to impotency.

Cicognani, according to Wiley, believed the Austrian capitulation was the result of a Pan-German Catholic organization, the *Neue Länder* Society. The Nuncio also confirmed what Wiley had previously reported that Innitzer and the previous Austrian government had a very strained relationship.²⁴ Cicognani may well have realized that his visits to the American embassy would be reported to Secretary Hull, since he knew his brother, Amleto, was in close contact with Sumner Welles, the Under-Secretary. Unfortunately, the papers of the Cicognani brothers, both of whom became cardinals, are not yet accessible.

In the meantime, Ambassador Phillips in Rome met the Austrian minister, Egon Berger-Waldenegg, who predicted that ninety percent of the people would vote for union with Germany. Phillips asked him what the effect would be on “the Austrian catholic [sic] church and upon the Austrian Jews. He replied that both would have the same treatment as that now

accorded to the church and to the Jews in Germany.”²⁵ Monsignor Joseph Hurley, an American working in the Secretariat of State, was arrested in Innsbruck because he was wearing clerical clothes, but was released when he proved his American citizenship. Phillips recorded that, while Hurley described a “reign of terror” in Austria, the Italian press reported only peaceful revolution.²⁶

By the end of March, Phillips more clearly understood the Vatican’s attitude toward Austria. He informed Secretary Hull that *Osservatore Romano* expressed reservations about the call for Catholic approval of the *Anschluss*. On March 29, it quoted from a statement of Innitzer to the parish priests of his archdiocese that “to avoid all misunderstanding regarding the declaration to be made on Sunday, it must once more be noted that it is made, naturally, under full guarantee of the rights of God and the Church.” Phillips interpreted this to mean the declaration read on March 27 “did not represent any departure from the Vatican’s point of view regarding the present differences at issue between the Catholic Church and National Socialism in general, and that it had only been read after specific guarantees.” He noted that the Vatican paper condemned the Nazi treatment of Schuschnigg and those in favor of the return of the Hapsburgs. Elsewhere, Phillips continued, the *Osservatore* challenged what Reich Minister Franck meant when he said “that political priests must be combated like Jews.” The Vatican paper assumed that this statement referred to Cardinal Faulhaber and concluded that “if this attack on Cardinal Faulhaber is accurately reported, it would offer irrefutable proof that the abused term of political Catholicism is intended to cover a religious struggle in which the Archbishop of Munich, exemplary leader of his flock, is the intrepid champion of the rights of God and the Church.” This use of Faulhaber’s name as “one of the ostracized” made clear what the Nazis meant by “render to God the things which are God’s,” the quotation Buerckel had used to sway the Austrian bishops that Hitler was promising the Church her rights. The term “political Catholicism” had also been applied to Mundelein. Phillips concluded that it was obvious that the Vatican was reserved about the Austrian Church’s attitude, but may have seen the possibility of bargaining with the Nazis now that six and a half million Catholics had been added to the Reich.²⁷ Before Phillips’ letter arrived in Washington, however, he and his superior knew there was no chance of “bargaining with the Nazis.”

On April 1, 1938, the *Osservatore Romano* announced that the Austrian hierarchy acted without the Vatican’s knowledge or consent. In the opinion of Arnaldo Cortesi, the *New York Times* Roman correspondent, the notice was “a bold gesture of defiance” on the part of the Vatican. Later that day, Vatican Radio strongly attacked Innitzer without naming him and saying that Austrian Catholics did not have to heed the plea to vote for the *Anschluss*. The broadcast also cited the *Schwarze Korps*, the official newspaper of the SS, as stating that, if “political Catholicism” were applied to Austria, it would be a “criminal act.” Vatican Radio explained that the Nazis, like the Marxists, used the phrase to mean that the Church and its leaders put “religious considerations before the State and before society.”²⁸

In the meantime, Pacelli summoned Innitzer to Rome. On the evening of April 5, the

Austrian prelate arrived in Rome, where Pacelli made it clear that the Pope had ordered the meeting — the newspapers in Vienna said nothing of Innitzer's trip or about either the article in the *Osservatore* or the radio broadcast. No one from the Vatican met him at the train station. While clearly the Vatican was angry with Innitzer, newspapers echoed Phillips's sentiments and speculated that perhaps Innitzer's action might be an opening for a new agreement, especially since the Vatican had taken pains to deny any official character to the Vatican Radio broadcast.²⁹ What happened beyond the eyes and ears of journalists, however, would have given the lie to such speculation. In his audience with the Pope on April 5, Pacelli noted that he received a cable from Cicognani in Vienna that Innitzer expected to arrive in Rome in the early evening and depart the next morning.³⁰ His stay in Rome would be longer.

Despite rumors that Innitzer might defy the Pope and even go into schism, he backed off and issued a new statement. Cortesi of the *New York Times* described Innitzer's evening meeting with Pacelli on the evening of his arrival as "very stormy," but then was won over on April 6 "by the Pontiff, who treated him more as an erring son in need of sympathy and understanding than as a rebel in need of discipline." In a new statement published in German by the *Osservatore*, Innitzer said that "the solemn declaration of March 18 ... was not intended to be, obviously, in approval of anything that was not and is not compatible with God's law and the Catholic Church's freedom and rights." Neither the state nor the party should interpret the declaration "as an obligation of conscience." The Austrian bishops further demanded in the future that no changes could be made in the concordat "without previous agreement with the Holy See." In a clause that was intended to preserve in Austria what the Church lost in Germany, the bishops demanded "the application of all regulations relative to schools and education as well as to the formation of youth shall correspond with the parents' natural rights and the religious and moral formation of Catholic youth in accordance with the principles of the Catholic faith." The statement forbade anti-Catholic propaganda and asserted "that Catholics shall retain the right to proclaim, defend and practice their Catholic faith and Christian principles in all fields of human life and by all the means at the disposal of contemporary civilization."³¹

At the same time Pacelli was negotiating with Innitzer, he had also received a letter, unfortunately now lost or unavailable, from Joseph P. Kennedy, ambassador to the Court of St. James, whom he had befriended during his American trip. In response to Kennedy's "investigation about some rumors concerning the attitude of the Church towards the new rulers in Austria and the possibility of an agreement in this regard between the Holy See and the Nazi government," Pacelli replied in a memorandum, probably translated into passable English by Enrico Galleazzi. He was giving him "my personal views which of course cannot reflect any positive information from the official circles and are just delivered to your confidential use." He thought that the original statement "was evidently the result of some compulsory influence" and may "have been prepared ... by a Governmental Press Bureau, if not be the Government Commissioner Buerckel himself." Continuing in the vein of his suggestion that

the hierarchy acted under pressure," he stated that "the Bishops have overlooked to quote in the text of the declaration the fundamental principles of the freedom of the practice of Christian religion, of the respect of the rights of the Church and of the abolishment of the anti-Christian propaganda, a clause that in view of the persecution in Germany could have appeared quite natural." He thought that the bishops should have expressed the "hope" of avoiding a *Kulturkampf* in Austria and of abating it in Germany, but he recognized that that "hope, though, which in consideration of the clear evidence of the facts could not be well founded and which — as it happened at the time of the Saar Plebiscite — would undoubtedly be deluded." With that background, he explained the summons of Innitzer to Rome and the new declaration, an English translation of which he attached. He then went on to enumerate the consistent German violations of the concordat and of the Holy See's willingness to negotiate, "but before a real understanding is reached there must be at least the beginning of the evidence of good faith on the other side: evidence that so far has been completely lacking in this instance, for which the possibility of an agreement between the two Powers is out of question for the time being."

Pacelli ended his letter with a proposal that Kennedy "convey to your Friend at home these personal private views of mine. Even in my personal judgment, no better opportunity than this for trying to carry on [sic] the plan that we had thought of while in America and that I know is amongst your aims." He was alluding to the discussion at Hyde Park of establishing diplomatic relations, which he thought would lessen the powerlessness and isolation of the Holy See in its "daily struggle against all sorts of political excesses from the bolsheviks and the new pagans arising amongst the young 'Arian' generations." He also believed that such relations "would increase the prestige of the American Government which would appear solely directed to use all means for insuring the peace of all peoples." Kennedy preserved a copy of this memorandum for himself, sent one to Roosevelt, and another copy to the State Department.³² The memorandum and the whole Innitzer affair indicate that Pacelli had little sympathy for Nazism. In 1955, the State Department published the document in *Foreign Relations of the United States*.³³

Notwithstanding his new declaration, however, Innitzer still had not abandoned his support for Nazism. Upon his return to Vienna, he ordered the swastika to be flown from his cathedral of Stefansdom and ordered all the church bells in his archdiocese to ring on April 9, the day before the plebiscite. Only gradually, as the Nazis first secularized marriage, curtailed Catholic education, and attacked Catholic youth did he change and himself become a subject to Nazi attack.

In the meantime, Hitler was preparing to visit Mussolini in Rome. Pius XI prepared his own welcome — he ordered the Vatican museums closed for the duration of the visit and he moved early to his summer residence of Castel Gandolfo, where he then declared to 436 newly married couples who came to a special audience that "the fact that it has not been considered both out of place and untimely to hoist in Rome — in Rome and on the day of the

sacred cross — the emblem of a cross that is not the cross of Christ.”³⁴ *The Osservatore Romano* and Vatican Radio both recorded these remarks.

In the meantime, both Mundelein and Spellman were actively engaged in working for diplomatic relations, to which Pacelli had alluded in his memorandum to Kennedy, but, during the last months of 1938, Mundelein took center stage. On September 4, 1938, Cardinal Patrick Hayes, Archbishop of New York, died. Spellman recorded in his diary: “The battle is certainly starting soon but with all the opposition I believe it is impossible.”³⁵ Even at this early date, he knew he was a contender for the nation’s most powerful diocese, and his eventual appointment was directly related to the issue of diplomatic relations. On September 9, Hayes was buried. Before the funeral, Spellman was approached by several friends of Roosevelt who had instructed them to confer with both him and Mundelein about relations with the Vatican. After the funeral, at which Mundelein presided, both the Cardinal and Spellman spoke about diplomatic relations and Spellman’s chances of being appointed Archbishop of New York. On October 12, the two prelates attended the annual meeting of the bishops in Washington, and two days later Spellman had dinner with Roosevelt who discussed the European situation. On October 19, Spellman went to New Orleans to attend the Eucharistic Congress. Again, he and Mundelein discussed diplomatic recognition of the Holy See.³⁶

As an indication that he still enjoyed Pius XI’s favor, Mundelein had been named papal legate to preside over the Congress, after which he was to go to Rome to report on the proceedings. It was also an occasion for him to show his friendship with Roosevelt. On October 1st, Roosevelt informed Mundelein that Ambassador Phillips had been given instructions about receiving the Cardinal upon his arrival in Naples. A few days later, Mundelein responded with the assurance to the President that “of course I shall see you personally before I leave, and to place myself at your service in any way I can be helpful. Thanks to your efforts in behalf of the peace of the world, I need not either postpone my trip — which for a time seemed probable — or to anticipate any dangers at sea, outside of unquiet winds and seas.”³⁷

On October 17, Mundelein arrived in New Orleans for the Congress that opened the next day. For a reception in his honor the evening of his arrival, Roosevelt sent a message read for him by Postmaster General James A. Farley. The president considered the Eucharistic Congress to be an indication that “no greater blessing could come to our land today than a revival of the spirit of religion.” He concluded his message: “May your prayers hasten the day when both men and nations will bring their lives into conformity with the teachings of Him who is the way, the light and the truth.”³⁸ It was the first time that that a president had addressed a Catholic assembly of this nature, even through an intermediary. But Roosevelt was not finished showing his affection for Chicago’s Cardinal. On his way to New York to sail for Rome, Mundelein stopped off at the White House to stay overnight and then joined Roosevelt on the presidential yacht for a brief cruise before continuing his journey.³⁹

On October 29, Mundelein sailed from New York for Naples, where Roosevelt orchestrated a reception to show the Italian government the esteem with which the Cardinal was held by

the United States government. On November 5, Ambassador Phillips was on the dock in Naples to welcome the Cardinal, who was accorded Italian military honors as a “prince of the blood,” in accordance with the concordat with the Holy See. Included in the entourage was Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini, substitute secretary of state for the ordinary affairs of the Church. Less than an hour after arriving, the Cardinal and his suite and welcoming committee boarded the barge of Rear Admiral Henry E. Lackey, commander of the Mediterranean fleet, to be feted aboard his flag ship, the cruiser *Omaha*. Phillips then escorted Mundelein to a special train provided by the Italian government to take him to Rome, where he was greeted by the entire embassy staff, other embassies to the Holy See, Archbishop Francesco Borgongini-Duca, the nuncio to Italy and a close friend of Spellman’s, and another contingent of the Italian army. *Der Angriff*, the Nazi newspaper, however, proclaimed in a headline: “Agitator priest, Mundelein, Visits Pope; Vatican Launches Election Deal. 150 Priests in his Suite. Big Action by Political Action in the United States.” The paper went on to claim that the Catholic support for Roosevelt in 1936 was due to a promise of establishing diplomatic relations, and this new show of respect was to sway Catholics to vote for Democratic candidates in the November 8 elections for the house and senate. It further cited the Vatican’s recent designation of Mundelein to preside in St. Peter’s over the beatification of Frances Cabrini, a naturalized American citizen and founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, as yet another stratagem for gaining Catholic support for Roosevelt.⁴⁰ Phillips had instructions to escort Mundelein to the precincts of the Vatican, but thought he had fulfilled that order by walking him to the car the Vatican had sent for him. Afterwards, the Cardinal was the guest of honor at a dinner at the American embassy and at other functions, including a dinner given in his honor by William Babbington Macauley, Irish ambassador to the Holy See, and his wife, Genevieve Garvin Brady.⁴¹ At the beatification ceremony for Frances Cabrini on November 13, Mundelein recalled that he had presided over her funeral twenty-one years before.⁴²

Even before Mundelein left Rome, the ecclesiastical scene was beginning to change and the world was moving closer to war. Pius XI had an attack of asthma that severely weakened his heart, as a result of which Cardinal Mundelein could not bid him farewell. Even more ominous was *Kristallnacht*, on November 9. This nationwide destruction of Jewish property, stores and homes throughout Germany, was supposedly a spontaneous response to the assassination of Ernst von Rath, an official at the German embassy in Paris, by Herschel Grynszpan, a teenage Polish Jew who sought to avenge German mistreatment of his family. The Jews were held responsible for the destruction and ordered to pay reparations. A few days later, however, while Jews in Bavaria were informed they could not reopen their shops, mobs attacked the residence of Cardinal Michael Faulhaber, after a speech by Bavarian Minister of the Interior, Adolf Wagner, denounced “Roman Catholic allies of the Jews.”⁴³ On November 13, Michael J. Curley, the irascible Archbishop of Baltimore, which at that time included Washington, preached a sermon at Holy Comforter Church near the Capitol. While focusing primarily on the persecution of the Jews, he also mentioned the attacks on Faulhaber and, a

month earlier, on Cardinal Innitzer, whose earlier acceptance of Nazism did not spare him Nazi anti-Catholic reprisals. Curley referred to “the madman Hitler and the crippled-minded Goebbels” who were responsible for the “madness that has taken possession of the Nazis of Germany in these days of persecution of helpless, innocent Jews whose only offense is that they are members of the race of which Jesus, founder of our Church and the Saviour of the world, was a member.” With a rhetorical flourish that was in error about an official German protest about Mundelein, he declared: “If Hitler does not like what I say about him and his cripple-minded Minister of Propaganda, let him take up the matter with Secretary of State Hull as he did when Cardinal Mundelein criticized him.”⁴⁴

But Curley was not alone in speaking out against *Kristallnacht*. On November 16, a number of Catholic leaders spoke on the radio against the Nazi persecution of the Jews in particular. Their broadcast was carried by both the Columbia Broadcasting System and the National Broadcasting Company. Father Maurice Sheehy, professor of Religious Education at the Catholic University, introduced the speakers and stated that “after sober, calm reflection, various groups and leaders of the Catholic Church have sought permission to raise their voices, not in mad hysteria, but in firm indignation against the atrocities visited upon the Jews in Germany.” The speakers were Archbishop John J. Mitty of San Francisco, Bishops Peter L. Ireton of Richmond and John Mark Gannon of Erie, Monsignor Joseph Corrigan, rector of the Catholic University of America, and former Governor and one time presidential candidate Alfred E. Smith.⁴⁵ Each forcefully condemned the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

Archbishop Edward Mooney of Detroit, chairman of the administrative board of the NCWC, joined the president of the Federal Council of Churches, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, and leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian Church in the United States. It may have been unprecedented for a Catholic prelate to issue a joint statement with Protestant leaders, but those were unprecedented times. Although Cicognani sent newspaper clippings of the statement to the Vatican, there is no documentary evidence that Mooney actually consulted him about the statement. Entitled “The Joint Resolution Representing American Churches,” the protest declared that “indisputable evidence of the burning of Jewish synagogues, confiscation of Jewish property and mass punishment of a merciless character for the tragic crime of one grief-crazed youth, with the open threat that Christians who protest will be treated in the same manner as Jews” compelled the signers “to record our horror and shame that the government of a great modern State should openly instigate and condone such action.” The statement noted the restrictions placed on both Catholic and Protestant churches in Germany, the opposition to Christianity that the Nazi party urged on German youth, and the “conviction that all totalitarianisms, whether Communist or Fascist, is, in its full implications, incompatible with Christianity, usurping as it does the loyalties which are due to God alone.”⁴⁶

As Europe moved toward war, the American Church and its leaders clearly showed where they stood. From the archival evidence, moreover, it is clear that Pacelli had no sympathy for

Hitler and National Socialism, despite his fears of Communism.

III. The United States and the Vatican during the War.

Until the Vatican archives are open for the pontificate of Pius XII, no final evaluation of him is possible, but there are several contemporary sources to help in that evaluation other than the eleven volumes published by the Vatican between 1967 and 1981. When Pius XI died on February 9, 1939, Ambassador Phillips recorded that he “half-masted” the flags and immediately went to sign the book of condolences at the nunciature to Italy. At Pacelli’s request, Monsignor Hurley then brought him formal notification, but for some reason the Vatican had failed to respond to the State Department’s queries about the funeral arrangements.⁴⁷ On March 2, he recorded his “sudden desire” to see smoke and arrived in St. Peter’s Square in time to see the papal tapestry being hung and the announcements of Pacelli’s election. The new Pope’s choice of name, Phillips recorded, “is an intimation to the world that he intends to pursue the strong policy of Pius XI.”⁴⁸ He personally hoped that Roosevelt would appoint a representative to the coronation “to show the respect and admiration which all Americans must feel for the new Pope.” On March 7, he received a telegram from Secretary Hull stating that he was to be appointed the president’s representative, but a Vatican official pointed out the impropriety of the Ambassador to the Quirinal, the head of government for Italy, to represent the United States at the papal funeral. Roosevelt then appointed Joseph P. Kennedy.⁴⁹ It was the first time that the United States had sent a representative to a papal coronation. Germany, incidentally, was not represented, even though it had diplomatic relations with the Holy See. It was also one of the few western countries that did not pick up the radio broadcast of the ceremonies.⁵⁰

While the Vatican’s relations with Germany were growing strained, those with the United States were becoming more cordial. One of the first steps of the new Pope in regard to the American Church was to name Spellman as Archbishop of New York. This promotion had been rumored since the death of Cardinal Hayes in September, 1938, but there were indications that, while in Rome, Mundelein promoted the transfer of Archbishop Joseph Rummel of New Orleans to New York, where Rummel grew up and for which he was ordained. Other names also surfaced, the most likely of which was Archbishop John T. McNicholas, O.P., of Cincinnati, who supposedly was actually notified of his appointment, but the death of Pius XI ended that possibility. Unfortunately, the episcopal nominations for bishops are not available after 1922, so many of the alternatives to Spellman have to remain conjectural. On April 12, 1939, Spellman received official notice of his appointment and was installed on May 23. One reason, of course, was Pius XII’s desire to have someone in New York, whom he could trust and who was on good terms with Roosevelt. The President, in turn, would now have to deal almost exclusively with Spellman, for his close friend, Mundelein, died of a heart attack on October 2, 1939.⁵¹

Spellman lost little time in working for what he long sought — some form of direct relations between Washington and the Vatican. In this, he had some support from Cordell Hull,

the Secretary of State, and Sumner Welles, the Under-Secretary of State, who as diplomats wanted as many embassies as possible. But Roosevelt had to be a politician, so he had to be careful of not arousing anti-Catholic feeling. The compromise was a mission for humanitarian concerns. On October 24, Roosevelt invited Spellman to discuss this proposal at the White House. Spellman then submitted a report of this plan to Cardinal Luigi Maglione, the Secretary of State, through Cicognani. In his mind, the arrangement was temporary. As a special mission, it would not need financial approval of the congress, nor would it require the establishment of a nunciature in Washington, but it could subsequently be elevated to diplomatic status. But then some of the old tension between Cicognani and Spellman, dating back at least to Pacelli's visit in 1936, surfaced. Cicognani also wrote a letter to Maglione to accompany Spellman's report, the result of which was that, on November 28, 1939, the Cardinal urged Cicognani to make a joint effort with Spellman to see the president again to urge him to carry out his proposal. This was hardly to Spellman's liking. He drafted a new version of the letter supposedly from Cicognani to him, went to Washington to have it typed on apostolic delegation stationary, had Cicognani sign it, and then went to see Roosevelt. The new version, published in the *Actes e documents du Saint Siège*, left the initiative entirely in Spellman's hands and set a time-frame within which Roosevelt was expected to act. On December 23, 1939, Roosevelt presented Spellman with a letter for Pius XII announcing that he was sending Myron Taylor as a "personal representative" to the Pope. The following day, he made the letter public and also wrote to Cyrus Adler, President of Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and George A. Buttrick, President of the Federal Council of Churches. President Roosevelt was trying to muster all the religious and moral forces to avoid war, but his sending of a representative to the Pope only brought forth protests.⁵²

Taylor, former chairman of the U.S. Steel Corporation and United States representative to the Evian Conference in France on Jewish refugees in 1938, owned a villa in Florence, from which, theoretically, he could travel to Rome for occasional meetings with the Pope. To enhance his role, he was given the personal rank of ambassador. On February 27, 1940, he presented his credentials to Pius XII. His official mission was to work for freedom of religion, freedom of communication, reduction of arms, and freedom of trade between nations. Technically, he was not to deal with ecclesiastical matters, although Roosevelt did put some items on his agenda, such as silencing Coughlin and recommending a nominee for the new archdiocese of Washington, which was actually left under the administration of Curley. He also arranged a papal audience for Sumner Welles who was making a rapid tour of European capitals to try to preserve peace. At the audience on March 18, the Pope, Maglione, and Welles agreed that a peace conference would be ineffective. In the meantime, Hitler and Mussolini had met only the day before, but their intentions were unclear. Was Hitler trying to drag Italy into war or was he trying to negotiate a peace through Mussolini? A principal purpose of Taylor's first visit was to attempt to prevent a German-Italian alliance. On April 24, 1940, both Pius XII and Roosevelt wrote Mussolini urging Italian non-belligerency. But, on June 10, 1940,

Italy entered the war as Germany's ally. Poor health soon forced Taylor to return to the United States, but the State Department did assign Harold H. Tittmann, a consular official at the embassy in Rome, as his temporary assistant.⁵³

During the next few months, Tittmann was named the permanent assistant to the President's personal representative to Pope Pius XII. As will be seen, this was a step toward quasi-official diplomatic relations. What prompted Taylor's second journey to Rome was the German invasion of the Soviet Union and Roosevelt's extension of Lend-Lease to the USSR. Was this a violation of the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* in 1937 prohibiting Catholics from cooperating with Communism? In July, 1941, Bishop Joseph Hurley, formerly of the Secretariat of State and then Bishop of St. Augustine, took a train to Washington, at the government's expense to broadcast on the radio the distinction between cooperation with Communism and cooperation with the Soviet people who were victims of aggression.⁵⁴ The Vatican ultimately accepted this interpretation, but recommended to Cicognani that he release it only to bishops who asked for it. Archbishop Mooney, who was still chairman of the administrative board of the NCWC, knew this was not sufficient. He arranged for Archbishop McNicholas, a respected theologian — and known to oppose Roosevelt — to write an article embodying the position in his diocesan newspaper that was then distributed through the Catholic News Service. When Taylor arrived in Rome, Vatican officials urged him to press his government to link aid to the extension of religious liberty.⁵⁵ In December, 1941, the whole focus has shifted from efforts to preserve peace to mobilizing for war. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The next day, the United States declared war on Japan, followed the next day by Germany's and Italy's declaring war on the United States and the American response. The declaration of war now made the Taylor Mission semi-permanent. In order to assure a steady flow of information, Hull requested and Roosevelt agreed to name Tittmann "Chargé d'Affaires," an official diplomatic title that allowed him to move into Vatican City with his family.

The problem of Japan, as will be seen, was complicated. For the moment it is important briefly to consider Taylor's other visits to the Vatican. In September, 1942, he again went to Rome. This time, he presented two memoranda. The first spoke of the Japanese attack on the United States, but he stressed that his country's battle was against the Japanese and Nazism, not Italy. The second was more forthright. It pointed to the similarity between papal pronouncements and American objectives and pledged that "in the conviction that anything less than complete victory would endanger the principles we fight for and our very existence as a nation the United States of America will prosecute the war until the Axis collapses." It promised "to support the Holy See in resisting" any Axis "proposals of peace without victory." This statement, in fact, was the work of Mooney, Hurley, and Michael Ready, general secretary of the NCWC. Taylor also spoke to the Secretariat of State about the deportation of French Jews and Nazi brutality and urged that the Pope speak out. Maglione replied that the Pope had done so and would do so again when it was opportune. Rather naively, Taylor also said the Soviet Union would be more open to granting religious liberty, if it were admitted to the family

of nations. Here the Vatican officials were less optimistic. Finally, Taylor spoke with Montini about the Allied bombing of German and Italian cities. When Montini suggested that the Allies spare civilian populations, Taylor replied that he knew of no Vatican intervention against the German bombings of London, Warsaw, or other cities. To this part of his memorandum, he attached photographs of London after the blitz.

To prepare the English response to Taylor's memoranda, the Pope had Robert Leiber, S.J., a German historian and close confidante, enlist the aid of Vincent McCormick, S.J., an American who had been rector of the Gregorian University. In his diary, McCormick implied that he may have altered the final version of the papal appeal to Roosevelt to spare civilian populations in aerial bombings. But the most interesting reply was the one to Taylor's "personal" memorandum, actually drafted by American Catholic leaders. It stated that the Pope "never thought in terms of peace by compromise at any cost."⁵⁶ The Pope's agreement not to accept peace by compromise, however, must not be construed as accepting what would become the Anglo-American position taken at Casablanca in February, 1943, of demanding an "unconditional surrender." The meaning of this phrase — the policy it expressed — would cause friction between the Anglo-American Allies and the Holy See which had vivid memories of the reparations demanded of Germany after World War I. As for Taylor, he would not return to Rome until after its liberation in June, 1944. Harold Tittmann, however, continued to reside in the Vatican and kept the State Department informed of what was happening through cables sent by way of the American legation in Switzerland.

The Taylor mission, as much as anything, had symbolic value for initiating formal contact between the United States and the Holy See, but there were some strange anomalies. The Vatican had the official policy of "impartiality," developed during World War I, that supposedly meant that the Pope remained independent of the warring parties, willing to offer mediation, but siding with none. In February, 1942, the Holy See accepted a diplomatic mission from Japan. As might be expected, the American response was immediate and negative. Maglione explained that negotiations had been underway with Japan since 1922. Initially Tittmann accepted this explanation. Then, the situation became complicated. Cicognani informed Maglione of the negative reaction in the United States and the danger of increasing anti-Catholicism. He went a step further and met with Welles to urge that Tittmann make as strong a representation as possible to Maglione. Here was the Vatican's own representative advising the United States government of how to protest to his own superiors!⁵⁷

But there is yet more to the story. On February 18, 1942, William Donovan, in charge of what was to become the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency, informed Roosevelt that the State Department had recommended that he have contact with the Vatican and sent him Count Leone Fumasoni-Biondi, former anti-Fascist member of the editorial staff of the *Corriere della Sera* in Milan and nephew of Cardinal Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, the missionary arm of the Pope, and former apostolic delegate to the United States. The Count was to

be liaison between Donovan and James Clement Dunn, assistant Secretary of State for Western Europe. In the meantime, Cicognani paid Donovan a long visit and offered to turn over to him all information gathered through other Vatican diplomatic channels, but Donovan cautioned that it was essential to keep this matter confidential.⁵⁸ Significantly, this meeting between Cicognani and Donovan occurred right in the middle of the protest over the Vatican acceptance of the Japanese mission. Cicognani was a professional Vatican diplomat. He remained in the United States as apostolic delegate from 1933 to 1958, probably because of Spellman's opposition to his promotion. He was capable of taking the initiative, but it is doubtful he would have offered to turn over information gathered through Vatican diplomatic channels without the authorization of his superiors in Rome. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to discover anything further about this. The policy of the Central Intelligence Agency is not to disclose any information concerning contacts of foreign nations or organizations with it or its predecessor without the authorization of those foreign entities. The papers of Dunn, a very distinguished diplomat, are not to be found, and efforts to locate Fumasoni-Biondi's papers have likewise been unsuccessful.

The role of Cicognani in the United States, moreover, should be seen in the context of the role his brother, Gaetano, played during the war as the Nuncio to Spain. Both the United States and the Vatican wished to keep Spain neutral. Roosevelt therefore assigned as ambassador to Spain Carlton J.H. Hayes, a history professor at Columbia University and convert to Catholicism. Was it accidental that the Vatican appointed Gaetano Cicognani to such a delicate position? Hayes's task was to show Franco that the American alliance with the Soviet Union did not mean any leaning toward Communism, a point also made by Spellman when he passed through Spain on his way to Rome in February, 1943.⁵⁹ The United States and the Vatican had a similar policy towards Ireland. Here, however, it was not so much the strategic importance as the fact that Ireland was officially neutral and so many American Catholics were of Irish ancestry.

But none of these facts solves the question of the "silence" of Pius XII about the Holocaust. The papal policy of "impartiality" was actually formulated during World War I, when the Treaty of London in 1915 banned the Holy See's participation in any peace negotiations because of the Italian fear of the Holy See's bringing up the Roman Question. In World War II, there was an added problem, for then the Soviet Union had joined the Allies against the Axis. Despite Pius XII's antipathy for Communism, he remained silent about Stalin and his atrocities during the war. On December 17, 1942, eleven allied nations, including the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union issued a declaration condemning Nazi atrocities against the Jews.⁶⁰ When Tittmann asked whether the Holy See would sign the declaration or issue its own condemnation, Maglione responded that the Holy See had "frequently condemned atrocities in general." The Cardinal added that "although deploring the cruelties [*sic*] that have come to his attention, he said that the Holy See was unable to verify the Allied reports as to the number of Jews exterminated, et. Cetera." Tittmann reported rumors that the Pope's

Christmas address “will take a strong stand on this subject,” but feared “any deviation from the generalities of his previous messages is unlikely.”⁶¹ As Tittmann feared, Pius XII’s allocution on December 24, was general and obtuse. The pontiff had added a section on the atrocities and specifically urged humanity to make a vow to all the victims of the day, including “the hundreds of thousands of persons who, without any fault on their part, sometimes only because of their nationality or race, have been consigned to death or to a slow decline.”⁶²

Even the supporters of Pius, such as McCormick, were critical. It was “much too heavy ... & obscurely expressed,” he wrote and suggested that the Pope “have an Italian or Frenchman prepare his text.”⁶³ He later positively contrasted the annual pastoral letter of the American bishops in November, 1942, with the papal address. The Americans had addressed the atrocities of the war and expressed their “deepest sympathy to our brother bishops in all countries of the world where religion is persecuted, liberty abolished, and the rights of God and of man are violated.” In particular, they spoke of their “deep sense of revulsion against the cruel indignities heaped upon the Jews in conquered countries and on defenseless people not of our faith.”⁶⁴ McCormick commented: “Splendid; they have done themselves honor.”⁶⁵ Despite Tittmann’s reservations about Pius’s allocution, however, he reported to the State Department that the Pope’s allusion to the Jews was clear enough that the German diplomats boycotted the Midnight Mass. In an audience with the Pope, a few days later, they discussed the absence of the Germans, and the Pope explained that he could not very well speak out against the Nazis without doing so against the Bolsheviks, which would not please the Allies.⁶⁶

This survey hardly solves any mysteries. That Pius XII harbored no sympathy for Hitler or Nazism is clear from the documents in the Vatican archives (that are now available for study up to 1939) and from his rapprochement with the United States. What remains problematic is the issue of his and other leaders’ failing to speak out in favor of the Jews. Did the Vatican have information that it refused to act on? Here the distinction is useful that Michael R. Marrus, Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Professor Emeritus of Holocaust Studies at the University of Toronto, makes between information and knowledge, the latter being the gradual internalization of atrocities that seemed incredible.⁶⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., who served in the OSS, makes much the same point. Even America’s first spy agency, which supposedly had excellent sources of information, balked at the Holocaust. It just seemed too impossible to imagine.⁶⁸

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ENDNOTES

Abbreviations:

ASV = Archivio Segreto Vaticano

NARA = National Archives and Records Administration

¹ ASV, AA, EE, SS, Guerra Europa: 1914-1918, XII, fasc. 22: Pacelli to Gasparri, Munich, Oct. 16, 1918.

² ASV, DAUS, V. Affari Esteri, Pos. 153, 19-23, Cicognani to Pacella, June 12, 1933.

³ ASV, AES, America, Pos. 232, fasc 56, 1933-1934, USSR 27-28: Galeazzi memo, Oct. 31, 1933.

⁴ NARA, RG 59, 762.66A/19, Dodd to secretary, Berlin, Sept. 13, 1933 and 762.66A/20, Dodd to secretary, Berlin, Jan. 25, 1934.

⁵ Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy from 1870 to 1965* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, Verlag, 1982; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1985), pp. 245-246.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 247-248. The Vatican side of the affair is in ASV, AES, America, Pos. 238, fasc. 66 — Coughlin.

⁷ Fogarty, *Vatican*, pp. 248-249.

⁸ Phillips Diary, May 20, 1937, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁹ ASV, AES, Germania, Pos. 719, fasc. 314: 14-19.

¹⁰ ASV, SS, AE, Germania, Pos. 719, fasc. 316: 28r-30r, Orsenigo to Pacelli, Berlin, April 1, 1937.

¹¹ NARA, RG 59, 862.404/203 Dodd to Hull, Berlin, Apr. 2, 1937.

¹² *New York Times*, May 20, 1937, p. 1.

¹³ ASV, AES, America, IV Periodo, No: Pos 247 P.O. fasc 87, 14: Pacelli to Washington, May 21, 1937 (text of cable).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15: Cicognani to Pacelli, May 21, 1937 (cable).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-25: Cicognani to Pacelli, May 27, 1937; 26-27: Mundelein to Cicognani, May 24, 1937.

¹⁶ ASV, AES, America, Pos. 247 P.O., 1937-1938, fasc. 87: 38-40: Menshausen to Pacelli, May 29, 1937.

¹⁷ ASV, AES, Sessioni, 1937, Fumasoni-Biondi to Pius XI, June 20, 1937.

¹⁸ ASV, DAUS, Pos. 116b, 35-37, memorandum of Michael Ready, meeting with Dunn June 10, 1937.

¹⁹ NARA, RG 59: 863.404/30: Wiley to Hull, Vienna, Feb. 10, 1938.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 863.404/33: Wiley to Hull, Vienna, Mar. 14, 1938 (cable).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 863.404/34: Wiley to Hull, Vienna, Mar. 18, 1938 (cable).

²² *New York Times*, Mar. 28, 1938, p. 7.

²³ *Ibid.*, Mar. 29, 1938, p. 13.

²⁴ NARA, RG 59, 863.00/1705: Wiley to Hull, Vienna, Apr. 2, 1938 (cable).

²⁵ Phillips Diary, Mar. 13, 1938.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Mar. 24, 1938.

²⁷ NARA, RG 59, 863.00/1708: Phillips to Hull, Rome, Mar. 31, 1938.

²⁸ *New York Times*, Apr. 1, 1938, pp. 1, 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Apr. 6, 1938, p. 1.

³⁰ ASV, AES, Stati Ecclesiastici (1930-1938), Pos. 430A P.O., fasc. 355, 39: audience of Apr. 5, 1938.

³¹ The statement is given in the *New York Times*, Apr. 7, 1938, p. 1.

³² NARA, RG 59, 863.404/40: Pacelli to Kennedy, Vatican, Apr. 19, 1938, attached to Herschel V. Johnson to Hull, London, Apr. 19, 1938.

³³ *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, 1938. General Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), 474-476.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, May 5, 1938, p. 1.

³⁵ AANY, Spellman Diary, Sept. 4, 1938.

³⁶ See my *Vatican and the American Hierarchy from 1870 to 1965* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, Verlag, 1982; Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1985), p. 253.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 253-254; FDRL, PPF 321, Mundelein to Roosevelt, Chicago, Oct. 5, 1938.

³⁸ *New York Times*, Oct. 18, 1938, p. 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Oct. 28, 1938, p. 20. The reference to his staying overnight at the White House is in AANY, Spellman Diary, Oct. 29, 1938.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, Nov. 6, 1938, p. 26.

⁴¹ FDRL, PSF 58, Phillips to Roosevelt, Rome, Nov. 10, 1938, with enclosed memorandum for the State Department.

⁴² *New York Times*, Nov. 14, 1938, p. 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Nov. 13, 1938, pp. 1, 38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1938, p. 7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Nov. 17, 1938, pp. 1, 7; the texts of the broadcast speeches are on p. 6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 6. See Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Ready to Mooney, Washington, Dec. 16, 1938,

"Proposal for Joint Resolution Representing American Churches," with corrections in Mooney's hand. For sending me these documents, I am grateful to Bishop Earl A. Boyea of Lansing.

⁴⁷ Phillips Diary, Feb. 9, 10, 15, 1939.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Mar. 2, 1939.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Mar. 4-7, 1939.

⁵⁰ *New York Times*, March 12, 1939, p. 1.

⁵¹ Fogarty, *Vatican*, pp. 255-258.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 260-263.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 263-266.

⁵⁴ Charles R. Gallagher, S.J., *Vatican Secret Diplomacy: Joseph P. Hurley and Pope Pius XII* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 131-132.

⁵⁵ Fogarty, *Vatican*, pp. 273-274.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 284-286.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 280-281.

⁵⁸ NARA, RG 226, microfilm, M1642, 20-10: Donovan to Roosevelt, Feb. 18, 1942.

⁵⁹ See for instance, Hayes' speech to the American Chamber of Commerce in Barcelona, July 30, 1942, in which he noted that there were roughly the same number of Catholics in the United States as there were in Spain; Hayes Papers, Columbia University, Box 1a. On Spellman's visit to Franco, see Fogarty, *Vatican*, p. 291-292.

⁶⁰ *New York Times*, Dec. 18, 1942, p. 1.

⁶¹ NARA Taylor Papers, Box 29L Tittmann to State, Dec. 22, 1942, sent from Berne, Dec. 26, 1942.

⁶² For the English text, see *New York Times*, Dec. 25, 1942, p. 10.

⁶³ James Hennesey, S.J., "American Jesuit in Wartime Rome: The Diary of Vincent A. McCormick, S.J., 1942-1945," *Mid-America*, LVI (Jan., 1974), 36.

⁶⁴ Hugh J. Nolan, *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops* (4 vols.; Washington: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1984), II, 41.

⁶⁵ Hennesey, p. 39.

⁶⁶ NARA, Taylor Papers, Box 29, Tittmann to Hull, Dec. 28, 1942, FRUS, Europeo (1943), 911-913: Tittmann to Hull, Dec. 30, 1942, forwarded from Bern, Jan. 5, 1943.

⁶⁷ Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2000), pp. 157-164.

⁶⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Life in the Twentieth Century: Innocent Beginnings, 1917-1950* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), pp. 306-313.

INTERPRETING *WE REMEMBER*

A REFLECTION ON THE SHOAH THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A DOCUMENT OF THE HOLY SEE

■
BY EUGENE J. FISHER

In March of 1998, the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews issued a long-awaited document, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*. At that very time I, midway through a dialogical pilgrimage of rabbis and Catholic bishops to Israel and Rome, was in an airplane flying from Jerusalem to Rome. The document was met with mixed responses from both Jewish leaders and Catholic leaders involved in Jewish-Catholic dialogue. It contained many good elements and yet seemed to verge from a straightforward acknowledgment of and repentance for Christian responsibility for the *Shoah* by hedging in some key areas. This paper will go through the history of the document, from the point of view of a participant in the process of its development and drafting, and will present an analysis of how one should understand it in the context of other Church documents and, as well, how its principal author and signer understood it.

The documents referred to in this paper are to be found in two short volumes published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs: *Catholics Remember the Holocaust* (Washington, DC: USCCB Publication No. 5-290, 1998; hereinafter CRH). The volumes which contain all cited documents with the exception of the United States bishops' statement, *Catholic Teaching on the Shoah: Implementing the Holy See's **We Remember*** (Washington, DC: USCCB Publication No. 5-406, 2001; hereinafter CTS), on how *We Remember* is to be understood and acted upon in American Catholic education and preaching. Since the statements in CRH leading up to and immediately following *We Remember* are short, and are published in chronological order in *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*, I will refer to those leading up to and following *We Remember* by the conferences of bishops — issuing them and by the date of issuance rather than footnoted page numbers. Similarly, I will summarize the statement itself section by section (pp. 47-56) as I will Cardinal Cassidy's reflections on and official interpretation of the document (pp. 61-76), which concludes the volume.

Pope John Paul II's Decision to Address the Church's Responsibility Regarding the Shoah

Pope John Paul II, Karol Wojtyla, was Polish and some of his closest friends as a youth were Jewish. In his young manhood, while he was a covert seminarian in Nazi-occupied Poland, concentration camps such as Auschwitz/Birkenau were set up, and systematically annihilated Jews, including virtually all of Wojtyla's Jewish friends. Improving Catholic-Jewish relations and eradicating anti-Semitism¹ from Christian tradition understandably became one of

the passions of his life and of his papacy.² On August 13, 1986, John Paul II became the second bishop of Rome to visit the Great Synagogue of Rome, St. Peter having been the first. Plans were made for the Pope to meet with representatives of the world's largest Jewish community as the first action of his September, 1987 visit to the United States.

As the staff person for the work of the bishops of the United States on Catholic-Jewish relations, I was of course deeply, and happily, involved in the innumerable details of such a meeting. Where, for example, would it take place? The Holy See indicated that a synagogue would be preferred. But the American Jewish community could not agree on whether it should be a Conservative, Reform or Orthodox synagogue. I suggested, having been involved in making the proper contacts between the United States Jewish community and the Holy See, that the meeting be held at the museum in Miami which was (with a little jiggling of dates) to show the exhibit of Vatican Judaica then touring the United States. This was agreeable to all parties, and the planning appeared to be going well. That is, until about six weeks before the meeting, in the middle of the summer of 1987, when it was announced that the Pope had met with the president of Catholic Austria, Kurt Waldheim.

It had just been revealed that Waldheim had been a Nazi during World War II and had, if not physically present in the death camps, participated in their organization and workings. The Jewish community was outraged, with very good reason. Innumerable phone calls ensued. It was joked at my office that I should have a telephone implanted in my ear (this being before the advent of cell phones). What ensued was that Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, the president of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews ("religious" meaning that they dealt with everything concerning Jews save for matters of the State of Israel, which was reserved to the Vatican Secretariat of State) flew into New York for a meeting with key Jewish leaders to see if something could be worked out to keep things moving along.

It was worked out. A book that Rabbi Leon Klenicki of the Anti-Defamation League and I had put together of the Pope's texts and addresses on Jews and Judaism³ was sent to the Pope. This would give him the opportunity to address and, again, condemn the *Shoah*, which he did in a letter to Archbishop John L. May, then president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Pope also expressed his "profound gratitude for your kindness in sending me the volume," calling it a "significant undertaking."⁴ More significantly, he addressed the *Shoah* directly:

(W)e Christians approach with immense respect the terrifying experience of the extermination of the *Shoah* suffered by the Jews during World War II ... As I said recently in Warsaw, it is precisely by reason of this terrible experience that the nation of Israel, her sufferings, and her Holocaust are today before the eyes of the Church, of all peoples and of all nations, as a warning, a witness, and a silent cry ... There is no doubt that the sufferings endured by the Jews are also for the Catholic Church a motive of sincere sorrow, especially when one thinks of the indifference and sometimes resentment which, in historical circumstances, have divided Jews and Christians.⁵

This was sufficient for the Jewish leaders to agree to come to Rome to meet, first with

Cardinal Willebrands and the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (hereinafter “Pontifical Commission”) on August 31, 1987 and with the Pope the next day. The discussions on the first day lead to the idea of a Vatican statement on the Holocaust. An interesting sideline to an otherwise most serious and intense day of negotiation occurred at the luncheon break, when we went to the Colombo hotel for lunch. The kitchen of the Colombo had been “koshered” and the meal followed the Jewish ritual laws. The hotel was, however, owned by the Knights of Malta and had distinctive dishware. On it were Crusader crosses. If one understands the historical memory of Jews about the Crusades (upwards of 10,000 Jews were massacred in the First Crusade by a mob of self-proclaimed Crusaders who were not under the restraints of the Church) and therefore the Crusader cross, one can understand the irony of eating a kosher meal served on plates such as those.

The next morning we travelled to Castel Gandolfo, the Pope’s summer residence, where the memory of and witness to the Holocaust as a “warning, a witness and a silent cry” to which the Church adds her voice. John Paul II approved and made his own the idea that had come out of the meeting, as I recall, from Gerhard Reigner of the World Jewish Congress, that the Holy See issued a statement on the Catholic Church and the Holocaust. The first step in the process of the development of that statement would take place in a meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee (hereinafter ILC) in Prague in 1990.

***Teshuvah* — Conversion of Heart/Repentance**

Prague

1990

The meeting began with a visit to Theresienstadt, a village 40 miles north of Prague that had been the Nazi’s “model ghetto” where they maintained reasonably humane conditions for the Jews in order to show it to enquiring visitors such as the Red Cross. Our visit took place on a grim, rainy day as if, as Cardinal William H. Keeler, the Episcopal Moderator for Catholic-Jewish Relations for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, remarked, to underscore the sadness of our pilgrimage to it. While “model” in some ways, many people were sent from there to their deaths, and there were gas chambers and crematoria in a section of the ghetto never shown to outside visitors.

Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, the president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, opened the meeting with a reflection on what we had just seen and the task that lay ahead of us, and of his Commission in drafting the document on the *Shoah*. The Church, all Catholics, he said must make a statement of *teshuvah* (repentance) for what Catholics did to and did not do for their Jewish brothers and sisters slated for extermination.

This was the first time that a spokesperson for the Holy See had ever used the Hebrew word, *teshuvah*, with reference to the Holocaust. On August 18, 1991, Pope John Paul II, speaking to Jewish leaders in Budapest, called on Catholics and Jews together, in a spirit of reconciliation after the *Shoah* “to progress by means of daily conversion of heart, or *teshuvah*, in repentance, fasting and works of mercy” in order to fight together against the hatred and

evil that still exist in our world today.⁶ The Pope referred to the “spirit” of the 1990 ILC meeting in Prague. The bulk of that meeting was devoted to a study of the different experiences of Jews and the treatment of them by Christians in different countries in Europe.

Since a statement of the universal Church could not specify those differences in detail, the Holy See’s statement needed to be preceded by statements coming from the key local churches where the Holocaust occurred. The death camp of Auschwitz/Birkenau, where over a million Jews and hundreds of thousands of Poles died, was liberated by Russian troops in January of 1945. This gave the bishops’ conferences of Europe and the United States an opportunity to issue statements in response to the Holy See’s request for them. The statements of the local churches were issued between November, 1994 and March, 1998. They laid the groundwork for and established the proper context for understanding *We Remember*. I shall in the following section cull out of these statements the passages I believe to be key to setting that context and thus interpreting the meaning of *We Remember*.

Joint Statement on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Holocaust Hungarian Bishops and Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary November 1994

The Hungarian bishops spoke frankly: “We consider it as the greatest shame of our twentieth century that hundreds of thousands of ... Jews living in Hungary ... were extinguished merely because of their origin.” They called the Holocaust an “unpardonable sin” which “burdens our history ... and reminds us of the obligation of propitiation.” They assigned responsibility not only to the perpetrators but also to “all those who failed to raise their voices.” They concluded, plaintively, that “Before God we now ask forgiveness for this failure,” noting that some did try to rescue Jews. Calling for reconciliation, the bishops condemn anti-Semitism “so that the crimes of the past will never happen again.” This “never again” affirmation echoes Pope John Paul II’s cry in his address to United States Jewish leaders in Miami in 1987 when he called for mutual respect and teaching future generations about the Holocaust “so that never again will such a horror be possible. Never again!” The Pope’s phrase, of course, echoes in turn and thus expresses the Church’s solidarity with the essential Jewish response to the *Shoah*.

Opportunity to Re-examine Relationships with the Jews

German Bishops

January 1995

Originally, the idea had been for a joint statement to be made by the German and Polish bishops’ conferences. After much hard work, however, the joint drafting team came to the conclusion that this was impossible because of the difference of their experiences, namely, the Germans having been conquerors and victimizers, the Poles having been victims of German invasion and occupation. The German bishops acknowledge this and also that “Auschwitz is ... part of the Polish history of suffering, and burdens the relationship between Poles and Germans.” Auschwitz was built first to house Polish prisoners. The attached camp of Birkenau was built

specifically as a death camp for Jews, who were overwhelmingly the major victims of Auschwitz/Birkenau and Nazi genocide, as the Polish bishops' statement, which follows, clearly shows.

The German bishops acknowledge without equivocation that the "anti-Jewish" attitude prevalent among Germans and among German Catholics "was one of the reasons why ... Christians did not offer due resistance to racial anti-Semitism." "Not a few" German Catholics the bishops admit, "got involved in the ideology of National Socialism and remained unmoved in the face of the crimes committed against ... Jews. There were "but few individual initiatives to help persecuted Jews," and these few "frequently did not receive support." Most "remained silent." Therefore, they conclude, "the Church, which we proclaim as holy ... is also a sinful Church and in need of conversion." Here, the German bishops cite a statement of the Austrian bishops on the 50th Anniversary of Kristallnacht, and go on to cite "the witness" given by the joint synod of dioceses in the Federal Republic of Germany, "Our Hope" issued on November 22, 1975, stating that during the *Shoah* "we were as a whole a church community who kept on living our lives while turning our backs too often on the fate of this Jewish community ... and remained silent about the crimes committed against Jews and Judaism." Here, the reunited German Catholic Church is making its own a statement of the old West Germany. "The practical sincerity of our will of renewal is linked to the confession of guilt and the willingness to painfully learn from this history of guilt of our country and of our church as well."

Note in this statement that it is clear that the bishops are saying that most Germans, and hence the German Church as a whole, were guilty of active or passive involvement in the attacks on the Jews which comprised the *Shoah*, and that as a whole the Church in Germany must confess its guilt in order to learn from it, while humbly requesting "the Jewish people to hear this word of conversion and will of renewal."

The Victims of Nazi Ideology

Polish Bishops

January 1995

The Polish bishops begin with some raw statistics. At Auschwitz/Birkenau alone over one million Jews, 75,000 non-Jewish Poles, 21,000 Romani (Gypsies), 15,000 Russians and 10-15,000 others were murdered. "Jews and Poles, who, together, though not to the same degree, were the victims of Nazi ideology." They acknowledge, therefore, the primacy of Jewish victimhood without denying their own, albeit secondary victimhood. Poles, they state, were "the involuntary witnesses to the extermination of Jews." The bishops maintain, correctly I might add,⁷ that there were good relations, in general, between Polish Jews and Catholics. "Jews were never driven out of Poland." Eighty percent of Polish Jews today, they maintain, can trace their descent "to Polish roots."

The Polish bishops note, again quite rightly, that the risks were higher in Poland than in Western Europe for those helping Jews. "Often, whole families were killed (for) giving refuge to Jews." There were, however, Polish Catholics who blackmailed Jews or cooperated in iden-

tifying Jews to the Germans. "A country marked with the burden of the *Shoah*," they conclude, must "educate future generations."

Commemorating the Liberation of Auschwitz

Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb

Chair, Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

January 1995

The United States bishops, having fought in the war against Hitler and not having in this country a history of oppression by Catholics of Jews with which to contend, were in a radically different position in addressing the *Shoah* from that of their European confreres. In American history Jews and Catholics were equally "outsiders," fellow immigrants in a predominantly Protestant country. The same neighborhoods, schools, businesses and professions that excluded Jews also excluded Catholics. Indeed, the only true religious pogrom in American history was perpetrated against Catholics, in Philadelphia in the 1850s. There, in the city of "brotherly love," a young Catholic girl in a "public" school declined to pray from the King James Bible. This act of constitutionally protected religious dissent so enraged the populace that riots broke out. Scores of Catholics were murdered. Catholic churches were burned, while the Pennsylvania Commonwealth troops stood by on the hills outside the city and watched. For the only time in American history, on two successive Sundays, the Catholic bishop dispensed his people from attending Mass, since it was deemed just too dangerous. Catholics, like Jews in this country, only began to break out of the ghettos forged for them after World War II, which had been a turning point for both of our communities, as it was for America as a whole. America, which needed its people to pull together to defeat the most dangerous enemies in Europe and Asia, realized that it needed its Jews and Catholics if it was to prevail.

Archbishop Lipscomb begins by recalling the November 14, 1942 statement of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the precursor to the present USCCB, condemning "premeditated and systematic extermination, especially of Jews," which in turn cited the 1937 statement of Pope Pius XI, *Mit Brennender Sorge* (*With Burning Heart*), written largely by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, which had been smuggled into Germany and read, at considerable risk, at the pulpits at Masses throughout Germany. Lipscomb recalled also the ringing Christmas, 1942, statement of Pope Pius XII condemning Germans for killing people "only because of their nationality or descent." Just as in America in that period, if you used the term "race," everyone understood that you meant African Americans (then "Negroes"), so in Europe if you used the term "nationality or descent," everyone knew that you meant Jews, as the *New York Times* and everyone else in Europe and America understood.

Archbishop Lipscomb goes on to deal with the specific American failures in the war, for example our refusal to bomb the railroad tracks leading to Auschwitz or Auschwitz itself, even though we knew, having with the British broken the Nazi codes, exactly what was going on

there and had regular flights flying over Auschwitz to hit other targets. Likewise, the United States government turned back the ship, the St. Louis, with hundreds of Jewish refugees aboard, most of whom ultimately died at the hands of the Nazi killing machine.

“Having fought the war against Hitler,” Archbishop Lipscomb rightly states, “Americans do not feel personal guilt for what the Nazis did” ... but ... “do acknowledge a real sense of responsibility for what fellow members in the community of the baptized did not do” ... to help Jews. Rescuers were “far too few but can serve as models” for Catholic children today. We must impregnate our Catholic educational systems, Archbishop Lipscomb concludes, quoting Pope John Paul II at the April 7, 1994 concert at the Vatican memorializing the victims of the *Shoah*, “to ensure that evil does not prevail ... as it did for millions of children of the Jewish People.”⁸

Supported by One Root: Our Relationship to Judaism

Dutch Bishops

October 1995

Again, the specificity of a given country comes into play. Faced with German occupation and given specific orders by the Nazis against speaking out on what they were about to do to the Jews of Holland, the Dutch bishops, unlike the Protestant clergy of the country, spoke out from their pulpits to denounce publically and without reservation, the deportation of the Dutch Jews to the concentration camps. The German response was to concentrate their efforts on Dutch Catholics of Jewish origin first and with all the force at their command. In this action, Edith Stein and her sister, among many others, were picked up and murdered by the Nazis, a response which caused Pope Pius XII to hesitate and refrain from his plans to condemn the Nazi attacks on the Jews even more strongly than he already had. He feared that it would only result in more Jews and Jewish Catholics, as in Holland, to be murdered. In historical hindsight, we can see that this laudable hesitation of Pope Pius XII, done in order to save Jews, was fruitless. The Nazis had decided upon systematic racial genocide, a *novum* in human history that Pius XII could not have known was even a possibility at the time he made his (now we see to be erroneous) decision to save Jewish lives as best he could. One cannot judge Pius XII on the basis of what was known only after the war, and what he did not, could not have known during it, until the very latest stages of the conflict.

The Dutch bishops, in their statement, took their own very honest stance, stating that they joined the Polish and German bishops “to recognize co-responsibility for the persecution of Jews in the past.” “We are filled,” they stated, “with shame and dismay when we recall the *Shoah*.” While noting the “courageous action of the (Dutch) episcopacy in opposing the deportation of Jews by the Nazis, from our country” the Dutch bishops also noted that from Holland, “the second highest percentage of Jews was deported and murdered.” The Dutch bishops acknowledge that “a tradition of theological and ecclesiastical anti-Judaism ... a catechism of vilification ... contributed to the climate that made the *Shoah* possible.” The Dutch bishops then speak of the “change of attitude” that occurred after the war. In 1949, a Catholic Council for Israel (the people) emerged, which was given “official status” in 1951. In 1994, an

Episcopal commission for relations with the Jews was established.

[One might note here that such an Episcopal commission for relations with Jews was established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and ably staffed by my esteemed predecessor, Fr. Edward Flannery, of blessed memory, in 1967.]

Confronting the Debate about the Role of Switzerland during the Second World War Swiss Bishops Conference

March 1997

As a neutral country, Switzerland did not face the choice of deporting its Jews to the concentration camps, and Jews who could make it to Switzerland survived the war. Still, the Swiss bishops admit, "Switzerland did not welcome as many refugees as she could have done", permitting certain people to enrich themselves." And they acknowledge the sins of Christian history against Jews: "For centuries, Christians and ecclesiastical teachings were guilty of persecuting and marginalizing Jews, giving rise to anti-Semitic sentiments. We shamefully declare that religious motivations ... played a definite role in this process." The bishops conclude by asking "pardon of the descendants of the victims as the Holy Father has done in preparation for the Year of Reconciliation,"¹⁰ and affirming "that "anti-Semitism and the Christian faith are incompatible."

It is worth noting that the Swiss bishops do not get quite right the reference to the Pope's prayer for pardon. He did not ask "the descendants of the victims" to forgive Christians for their sins. He asked God's forgiveness. In Jewish teaching, only the victim can forgive the perpetrator for what he or she has done. Friends, relatives, descendants are not the wronged party. So the Pope asked God's forgiveness, publicly, i.e. in the presence of the living, surviving Jewish people, thus avoiding putting them into the difficult situation of being asked to do something their tradition teaches cannot be done.

Lessons to Learn from Catholic Rescuers

Cardinal William H. Keeler, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

April 1997

In April of 1997, at a ceremony at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C Cardinal Keeler was asked to give some remarks honoring the righteous Catholics who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust,. Recalling the 1990 visit of the International Catholic Liaison Committee to Theresienstadt, he cited Cardinal Cassidy's "repentance/*teshuvah* for the evil that so many of its baptized members perpetrated and so many others failed to stop," as well as the section of *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* on the need for Christian repentance referred to by the Swiss bishops.

Noting that we remember the rescuers precisely because they are the exception, the few among the many (note this quantitative weighting, since it will come up again in the controversy surrounding the final text of *We Remember*), Keeler offers a few notable examples: Blessed Bernard Lichtenberg, ¹¹ rector of the Catholic cathedral in Berlin "who defied the

German authorities Sunday after Sunday by preaching sermons against Nazism and by condemning anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Jews.” Picked up by the Gestapo, Lichtenberg died on the way to Dachau. *Zegota*, the Polish Catholic organization devoted entirely to rescuing Jews, the only such religiously based (whether Protestant or Catholic) organization in occupied Europe. And the Italian, Polish and Belgian nuns who took in and saved thousands of Jews in their convents.

What can we learn from these rescuers that we can pass on to future generations? Cardinal Keeler gives four qualities of the righteous that studies have shown they have in common. First, they had a deeply rooted moral sense, which they often expressed as having “little choice but to rescue.” Second, they believed that there is an ultimate meaning to life, beyond the present, faith in God. Third, many had prior acquaintances with Jews, even if these were not the Jews they saved. Fourth, they saw Jews as humans, not “morally expendable,” which is to say that they resisted racism and thus racial anti-Semitism.

Declaration of Repentance

French Bishops

September 1997

Those who followed the progression of statements of local conferences of bishops from Europe and the United States tend to agree that the statement of the French bishops was the most poignant and, in some ways, the most telling of them all. Referencing the August 5, 1947 Seelisberg Declaration of a group of Protestant and Catholic leaders, with Jewish advisors such as French historian Jules Isaac, the declaration of repentance delineated and condemned the essential elements of the teaching of contempt.¹² The French bishops — and it must be noted that these were the bishops from whose dioceses the Jews were deported — stated that by 1941, 40,000 Jews were in internment. The French Church of the time, however, “saw protection of its own faithful as a first priority.” There was, among French clergy, a “loyalism and docility ... far beyond the obedience traditionally accorded civil authorities.” And in this case the “civil authorities” were, if indirectly, Nazi Germans, not even the French themselves. The French Church, bowing to “conformity” and “prudence” failed “to realize “that” its voice could have echoed loudly by taking a definitive stance.” ... “bishops of France made no public statements.” While the encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Mit Brennender Sorge* (*With Burning Heart*) and his 1938 declaration that “we are all spiritually Semites” should have motivated the French bishops to protest loudly, they did not, the bishops confess in this 1997 declaration. They note that many factors intervened, among them, most clearly, the religious anti-Judaism of the Church’s teaching of contempt. But they have to acknowledge, and do, that the French Vichy government “shared in the genocidal policy” of the Nazis. “Some (French) Christians,” they state, “were not lacking.” But the silence of the French Church as a whole “was a sin.”

Letter to the Jewish Community of Italy

Italian Bishops

March 1998

The statement of the Italian bishops came in the form of a letter delivered to Professor Elio Toaff and Dr. Tulia Zevi, respectively the Chief Rabbi and president of the Jewish community of Rome. Citing the November 1, 1997 statement of Pope John Paul II, that “anti-Semitism has no justification and is absolutely condemnable,” the bishops affirm Rabbi Toaff’s comment that “In Italy we had anti-Semitism of the state, not of the populace.” This, of course, is so. While Mussolini went along with Hitler in declaring anti-Jewish laws, some 75 to 80% of the Jewish population of Italy survived the Holocaust, a great many of them by being taken into and hidden in the convents and monasteries of the country. In Rome, despite one day of roundup of Jews, which Pope Pius XII protested and threatened to make public if the Germans continued, the same large proportion of Jews were saved. Pius XII not only stopped the roundups of Jews in Rome, he made sure that the Jews hidden in Rome’s convents and monasteries were taken care of and well fed. I personally met, when I was staying with my family in the convent of the Sisters of Sion on the Geniculum, the now elderly, but then young nun, who went down to the gate of the convent courtyard to meet the truck from the Vatican carrying food for the over two hundred Jews hidden within the convent, all of whom survived the *Shoah*. Pope Pius XII would have had to have authorized these deliveries himself, since they went out to the thousands of Jews hidden in Roman convents and monasteries, were extremely risky, and would have cost a great deal of money.

The fact that Italian Catholics, with the full participation of the Church and the Holy See, managed to save so many of the country’s Jews, even under German occupation, the Italian bishops state, “did come to mitigate in some manner the lack of prophetic action when the situation passed from the violence of words to violence against persons. Yet such individual deeds were not sufficient to prevent the catastrophe.” This assessment, I believe, is true not only with regard to Italy, but with regard to the pontificate of Pope Pius XII. He did what he thought he could to save Jews. But he was a diplomat, not a prophet. And even had he been a prophet and spoken out loudly against what was happening to the Jews, one has to wonder if Adolf Hitler, any more than other secular rulers in Europe since the time of Henry VIII, would have listened, or cared, or changed his maniacal plan to murder all Jews by one iota.

The bishops go on to express their dismay and the need for the Church in Italy to repent, to make an act of *teshuvah*. Recalling the 1985 Vatican *Guidelines for the Correct Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching and Catechesis*, they call on their fellow Italian Catholics to acknowledge the painful truth of the responsibility of Christian teaching of contempt in paving the way for the Holocaust, and admitting our responsibility as leaders of the Catholic Church. We should, they say, as a major goal for our community, seek dialogue and reconciliation with our Jewish brothers and sisters.

We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah**Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews****March 1998**

A bit of “insider” history on the late stages of the development of the document may be in order here. The document as developed by Cardinal Cassidy and the Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, and as approved by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (i.e. the Holy Office headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI) was, in the main excellent, and did not contain the ambiguities allowing for negative interpretations. After coming out of the Holy Office, the statements was, as is the normal procedure, submitted to the Holy See's Secretariat of State, presided over at the time by Cardinal Angelo Sodano. Cardinal Sodano sat on the document for over a year until Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore, Episcopal Moderator for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the USCCB, and Cardinal John O'Connor, who had served in that capacity while Keeler was President of the USCCB and who continued to be the co-chair of the Catholic/Orthodox-Jewish Consultation, met with Sodano in Rome. On their return to the States, Cardinal Keeler met with me, giving me the document as it stood, along with a list of Cardinal Sodano's difficulties with it. He asked me to attempt to come up with wording that would respond to Sodano's objections while preserving the essence of the original, Holy Office-approved statement.

A word here is necessary on the internal hierarchical structure of the Vatican. The Pope, of course, is the sovereign. Next comes the Secretary of State (Sodano) on all matters save the purely doctrinal, and then the head of the Holy Office (Ratzinger). Cardinal Sodano's objections had to do with matters of history, over the centuries and during the *Shoah*, and so were in his proper purview to adjudicate.

In any event, I undertook the task and sent the results to Cardinal Keeler, who, presumably after consultation with Cardinal O'Connor, sent them on to Rome. We waited. The document, as it happened, was promulgated by Cardinal Cassidy's office on March 16, 1998. At that moment Cardinal Keeler and I, and a distinguished group of rabbis and bishops, having completed what amounted to a joint pilgrimage to Israel — the Holy Land for both of our peoples — were on an airplane to Rome, to show the Jewish folks Catholicism's Eternal City as they had shown us Judaism's Holy City.¹³ We were met at the airport with a car, which whisked Cardinal Keeler off to a direct meeting with Cardinal Cassidy — undoubtedly the chief topic of which was *We Remember*, a bus which was to take the rest of us to our hotel, and several copies of the document itself. Being familiar with the original, I was able to read it more rapidly on the bus than our Jewish colleagues. But I could tell when they reached certain sections by their groans and mutterings of “what is this, that's not right!” Cardinal Sodano's office, it turned out, had accepted some of my wordings, but not all, and added several insertions, to be discussed below, which caused, in my view, unnecessary, controversies over what it meant to say, controversies that persist to this day, though I believe they need not, as shall be seen. Cardinal Cassidy stated quite blankly in meeting with us in his office the next morning that

Cardinal Sodano had given him the pseudo-option of signing and releasing the document as given back to him or not issuing it at all.

When the Vatican document was issued, however, it was prefaced with two short, but unusual documents: a letter welcoming it by the Pope, which is most unusual for a statement issued by a Pontifical Commission, and a “Statement on Presenting the Document” by Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, who did sign the document. These are important for interpreting the document, as is the address given later that year by Cardinal Cassidy to the American Jewish Committee in Washington, in which he gave, as the signator of the document, its official interpretation, resolving in it the major, understandable concerns of Jews and Catholics committed to the dialogue.

The Pope, John Paul II, addressed his March 12, 1998 letter to Cardinal Cassidy. Recalling “with a sense of deep sorrow the sufferings of the Jewish people,” he called the *Shoah* “an indelible stain on the century that is coming to a close.” The joy of the pending Jubilee Year of 2000, he stated, stems “above all” from “repentance of past errors” and “reconciliation with God and neighbor.” John Paul II expressed his “deepest hope” that *We Remember* would help “heal the wounds of past injustices” and “enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the *Shoah* will never again be possible.”

Cardinal Cassidy's introduction pointed out that the document was addressed to all Catholics around the world, not just to Catholics in Europe, since it is “when looking into her own mystery” that the Church encounters the people Israel.¹⁴ He cited Pope John Paul II's 1986 address to the Jews in Warsaw that called the Jewish memory of the Holocaust a “warning, a witness and a silent cry” to all humanity, likened to that of the prophets, to which the Church must add her own voice. I would note that this gives to the Jewish People a priority of witness over that of the Church — a truly remarkable statement for any pope to make. Cassidy expressed his hope that the document would effectively combat Holocaust denial and revisionism and abjured Christians to remember that the balance of relations over the past two millennia “has been negative.”

Summary of Text of *We Remember*

1. The Tragedy of the *Shoah* and the Duty of Remembrance

Citing Pope John Paul II's *Tertio Millennio Advniente*, the document anguishes over the “unspeakable tragedy” of the *Shoah*, in which millions were murdered for the “sole reason (of) their Jewish origin.” Few, it states, “survived the camps.” I would note here that those relative “few” went on to create new lives, new families in the United States and, especially, in the country they created out of the ashes of Auschwitz, the State of Israel. Israel is in its essence a witness to the world of hope, of faith, in humanity and in the God in whose image we are created. To have come out of the death camps and to have had children, helpless infants perhaps to become a new generation of victims of genocide, runs contrary to all human logic. That the Jews did this is a sign, inevitably divinely inspired, of the ongoing, eternal relationship be-

tween God and the Jewish People.

The document goes on to affirm, quite rightly, that the Church's relationship with the Jewish People is unlike that with any other religion. It is such that, as the Church recalls its origins in Judaism and its past sins against Judaism, "the common future of Jews and Christians demands that we remember, for there is 'no future without memory.'" We must remember not just for the sake of preserving the past, which defines our present, but for the sake of *memoria future*, the education of future generations so that "never again" will such crimes against essential humanity occur, against Jews or any other human group. As we resolve this, Catholics can only beseech Jews "to hear us with an open heart."

2. What We Must Remember

The statement declares, quite properly, that the "magnitude of the crime (against Jews) raises many questions." There will need to be "much scholarly study" in historical, sociological, political, philosophical and psychological areas. But even more, it emphasizes, there must be developed "a moral and religious memory, particularly among Christians" that it happened in countries long Christian, "for this raises the question of the relationship between Nazi persecution and centuries of Christian attitudes toward the Jews." Some have criticized the document for raising this and other questions but not offering definitive answers. To my mind, these criticisms miss the point. The document acknowledges the legitimacy of these trenchant questions, the answers to which historians may judge to the detriment of the Church, and says "so be it." This encourages the search for truth, and opens a vulnerability to a negative conclusion by historians, which I believe is precisely what needed to be said in this section.

3. Relations between Jews and Christians

This section, unlike the first two and the last, came under rather severe criticism from the document's responders, Christian as well as Jewish. I would agree that there are things that it did not say that it should have said; that attempting to evaluate two millennia of history in a few short paragraphs was an impossible (and doubtlessly unnecessary task) to have set for itself; and that it takes a too optimistic picture of the historic relationship, though many in the Jewish community and Christian sympathizers tend to the opposite, equally wrongful, "lachrymose" view of Jewish-Christian history in which it was at all times and in every place as bad for Jews as it was in some times and some places. This lachrymose view, however, fails to explain how Jews survived in such large numbers in Christian (especially Eastern) Europe or why they chose to stay in Christian Europe rather than migrate to Muslim countries. So while maintaining the caveat that the treatment of Jewish-Christian history over the ages tends to list toward the positive, one must realize the necessity of not listing too far in the other direction. For that, too, has equal hazards. It is best, in my view, to stay with the shades of gray in the middle of these two extreme views.

The section begins by quoting Pope John Paul II in a Symposium on the roots of anti-Semitism from October 31, 1997: "In the Christian world — I do not say on the part of the Church as such — erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament regarding the

Jewish people and their alleged culpability have for too long engendered feelings of hostility toward this people.” Two things might be noted here. First, the caveat on “the Church as such” follows from understanding the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. As such, the Church cannot be said to sin, though as a human institution, it is always in need of repentance for its sins. *Semper Reformanda*. Second, *We Remember* does not, and I believe should have, finished John Paul II’s reflection at the Symposium that these negative attitudes resulted in too many Christians failing to act toward the Jews as the world rightly expected Christians to act during the *Shoah*, though this conclusion is implicit in what is quoted.

The document then goes on to give a very short history of Christian-Jewish relations, stating for example that by the end of the 18th century Jews “generally had achieved an equal standing with other citizens” in Europe. This is true, but the document could have noted that this was the result of the Enlightenment, not Church teaching. The document then acknowledges that in the 19th Century there arose “a false and exacerbated nationalism ... (and) an anti-Judaism that was essentially more sociological and political than religious ... affirming an original diversity of races ... a distinction between so-called Nordic-Aryan races and supposedly inferior races.” The document notes that Cardinals Bertram of Breslau and Faulhaber of Bavaria condemned this denial of the unity of humanity as stemming from one set of parents (Adam and Eve). This also is true, but it omits the fact that in the early days of the Nazi movement in Bavaria many Catholics, including many priests, were attracted to National Socialism and participated in its activities and ceremonies.¹⁵

4. Distinction between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism

This section delineates the difference between racial anti-Semitism, based on theories contrary to the teachings of the Church, and Christian mistrust and hostility called anti-Judaism. “The *Shoah* was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity,” and it persecuted the Church, too. Again, this is true, but *We Remember* needed to articulate at this point that the reason modern racial anti-Semitism was able to gain such a foothold in Catholic Bavaria, for example, was the centuries long teaching of contempt by the Church against Jews and Judaism. The distinction between the Church’s teaching of contempt and modern racial anti-Semitism is valid and important, but equally valid and important is the fact that without the former the latter could not have spread so widely as to make the Holocaust possible. Put another way, the Christian anti-Jewish teaching is a necessary cause for explaining the Holocaust, but not a sufficient cause, since numerous other factors were involved. Catholic Italy, for example, had the same basic catechism as Catholic Bavaria and Catholic Austria (the latter heavily involved in the deeds of genocide). But the Italian culture as well as the history of papal protection of Jews over the centuries¹⁶ mitigated the attraction of racism, perhaps especially racism against Jews, with the result that Italian Catholics saved some 75-80% of their Jews and that if Jews could get themselves into the hands of the Italian army, they would not be sent to the concentration camps.

We Remember goes on to question “whether the Nazi persecution of the Jews was not made

easier by the anti-Jewish prejudices embedded in *some* Christian minds and hearts? ... Did Christians give every possible assistance to the persecuted Jews? *Many* did but others did not ... *Many* Jews thanked Pope Pius XII for helping them. *Many* Catholic bishops, priests, religious and laity have been honored for this reason by the State of Israel" (italics added). Only at this point does the document cite the completion of the statement of Pope John Paul II, cited above, "alongside such courageous men and women, the spiritual action of other Christians was not that which might be expected of Christ's followers."

Note, however, how this wording reverses John Paul II's "many" and "some," un-historically making it appear that "many" = most Christians helped Jews, while only some were active participants in or passive observers to the Holocaust. This shift is at the heart of the lingering controversies over *We Remember*, and its interpretation and implementation in Catholic education.

The document then becomes once again more straightforward, speaking of the "heavy burden of conscience" for all Christians and stating that "we deeply regret the errors and failures of those sons and daughters of the Church" who were actively involved or passive observers. And it strongly condemns anti-Semitism and racism.

"Sons and daughters" is yet another vague term in the document. Does it include the hierarchy and the popes who fostered the teaching of contempt? Actually, it does. The delicacy of terminology stems from the understanding of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. Since Christ, as the Son of God, was sinless though tempted, so too His Mystical Body must be considered sinless, even if every human within it, from laypersons to popes, have been sinful. And, it must be stated, as a human institution, the Church is, with regard to its anti-Judaic past, systemically sinful as it has been more recently with regard to the sexual abuse of children by its clergy.

5. Toward a Common Future

In Section Five, "Looking Together to a Common Future," it is stated that,

[T]he Catholic Church desires to express her deep sorrow for the failures of her sons and daughters in every age. This is an act of repentance (*teshuvah*) since, as members of the Church we are linked to the sins as well as the merits of all her children. To remember this terrible experience of extermination is to become fully conscious of the salutary warning it entails ... (that) never again should such a genocidal attack on Jews take place.

Here, the document has reverted to the more precise language of Pope John Paul II, which it reflects without any hedging from the Secretariat of State.

On the morning after the promulgation of the document and our arrival in Rome from Jerusalem, we, the United States bishops and rabbis, met with Cardinal Cassidy at the offices of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jewish People. In this meeting, Rabbi Mordecai Waxman and Rabbi James Rudin pointed out the ambiguities and asked for explanations of the seemingly Church-apologetic statements in the document, which I have indicated above. Cardinal Kasper was most candid in his response. He acknowledged the va-

lidity of the Jewish (with support of the Catholics present) critique and stated that these shortcomings in his (and our) view were the result of the intervention of the Vatican Secretary of State, which he was powerless to oppose. So, facing the choice of putting out a flawed document or none at all, Cardinal Cassidy chose to sign it, while holding yet, as we shall see, more than a few interpretive cards in his diplomatic pocket.

Statement of Cardinal William H. Keeler and Dr. Eugene Fisher

March 16, 1998

That evening our group was invited to a reception in the home of Ambassador Lindy Boggs, the American ambassador to the Holy See. After the formal opening welcome and remarks by Cardinal Keeler and Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, the co-leaders of the pilgrimage, the Cardinal and I went to the ambassador's study to work out a statement. Though aware of the ambiguities and problems in the text, we chose to stress its essentially positive thrust. We stressed its twin focus: first, "repentance for the past and hope for the future," urging "joint Catholic-Jewish studies" of the Holocaust,¹⁷ and, second, "educational programs, opportunities for rethinking old categories as well as probing the most difficult areas of moral thought ... to look back at centuries of Christian misunderstandings both of Judaism and of the New Testament ... and seek to replace them with more accurate appreciation of both."

A Step Forward in an Ongoing Dialogue

Cardinal John O'Connor

March 1998

Cardinal John O'Connor of New York had taken over from Cardinal Keeler as interim Episcopal Moderator for Catholic-Jewish Relations for the USCCB during the period when Keeler was President of the Bishops' Conference. And he assumed the Catholic chair of the Catholic/Orthodox Jewish Consultation after that. *We Remember*, Cardinal O'Connor said, "examines the failure of many"¹⁸ in the Church in responding to the persecution and the suffering of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. While recognizing that the roots of Nazi anti-Semitism grew outside the Church, it also addresses unambiguously and directly the erroneous and unjust application of church teaching on the part of many which led, at least in part, to a climate which made it easier for the Nazis to carry out the Holocaust. Here, O'Connor is interpreting the document (correctly) in a way which resolves its ambiguities positively. O'Connor expresses his awareness of and understanding for those "people of good will" who fault the document for not being "stronger," but hopes that all will see it "as another step forward in the ongoing dialogue between Catholics and Jews."

Our Meeting with Cardinal Cassidy

On March 17, our bishop/rabbi pilgrimage group met with Cardinal Cassidy. Rabbi Waxman and Rabbi Rudin went through a list of serious concerns about the text. Why so absolute a distinction between Christian anti-Judaism and Nazi racial anti-Semitism, they asked. It seems

obvious from the study of history that the former at least laid the groundwork for the latter, and that the latter incorporated many elements of the former. Why does the text say, “sons and daughters” of the Church? Surely the problem was more widespread, more systemic in Christian teaching, preaching and actions against the Jews than the acts of some isolated individuals. Why the extended defense of Pope Pius XII in footnote 16, with no indication that there are other possible ways to view what he did and did not do? Why the quotes from Jewish and Israeli leaders issued at the time of Pius XII’s death? Jews, no less than Christians, tend to speak only of the positive aspects of the recently deceased, so this is not really a fair representation of Jewish understanding of the role played by the Pope during the Holocaust. The brief history of Christian-Jewish relations over the centuries presented in the document, the rabbis noted, is much rosier and more benign than our Jewish historical memory of them.

Cardinal Cassidy listened closely and acknowledged the legitimacy of the Jewish concerns. Without going into details, he said that, as noted above, he had no choice but to issue the statement as given back to him by the Secretary of State, or not issuing it at all.

Reflections Regarding the Vatican Statement on the *Shoah*

Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy

May 1998

In May of 1988, Cardinal Cassidy addressed the annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in Washington, D.C. In his address, he responded in detail to the concerns expressed to him by our group and, by then, others. He began with a history of the document and its need for specific, especially European (for it was there that the *Shoah* took place) conferences of bishops to make their own statement before the Holy See could address “all Christians” in more general terms. It was addressed to the universal Church, even in areas where there are few Jews, because the general, universal teachings of the Church, and the Church’s own understanding of itself, were and are involved in the events leading to the *Shoah*, in what the Church has said and should in the future say about its relationship to God’s people, the Jews, from which Christianity was born.

Remembrance of the Holocaust, Cassidy states, is at the heart of *We Remember*. It is a “salutary warning” for all Christians (not just Catholics) to eschew “the spoiled seeds” of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, and to replace distrust with reconciliation, good will and common goals. Citing *Nostra Aetate*, Cassidy said that it is when “pondering her own mystery that the Church encounters the mystery of Israel.” Christian negative attitudes toward Jews, therefore, will lead the Church into misunderstanding itself, and its Jewish founder, Jesus. Negative attitudes will also, as they have so often in the past, lead to discrimination, expulsions, forced conversions, scapegoating, violence against and massacres of Jews.

Cassidy affirmed the distinction made in *We Remember* between racial anti-Semitism and traditional Christian anti-Judaism, but notes as well the causal relationship between them. The Nazi persecution of the Jews, he stated, was “made easier by the anti-Jewish prejudices embedded in some Christian minds and hearts.” “This,” he states, “is clear in the document;”

though he again stresses the need to judge countries and individuals on a case by case basis. Thanks to Cassidy's clarification, it might be noted, the distinction is now clear.

"There were members of the Church who did everything in their power to save Jewish lives," the cardinal continued, summarizing his understanding of the document he signed, but "many did not." Note his estimation here that the rescuers were few, while the collaborators and passive witnesses many. Cassidy went on to give some reasons for the failures and sins of the many. "Some were afraid, some took advantage, others were moved by envy."

I would add greed, whether over reward money from the Nazis or the chance to steal the property of Jew taken away to the camps, to His Eminence's list of motivations for evil.

Cassidy then quotes the key passage in the document leading to the need for Christian "repentance/teshuvah." Interestingly and importantly, he declares that the document itself is not the "final word" on this deep and troubling issue. Further study is needed. Again, he emphasized the need to read the document not in isolation but within the context of the statements of the conferences of bishops, especially that of the French bishops, meditating upon their admission that "too many of the Church's pastors committed an offense, by their silence, an offense against the Church herself and her mission" in the face of anti-Jewish laws. The French bishops, Cassidy believes, "admit the role, indirect if not direct, in the process which led to the *Shoah* played by commonly held anti-Jewish prejudices which Christians were guilty of maintaining."

Cassidy then follows with a candid summary of Jewish reactions to *We Remember*, mostly against and some in favor of the document. One example is that of the Jewish pioneer in Jewish-Catholic relations, Judith Banki, who affirmed that whatever the ambiguities of the text on some issues, it was a "clear rebuttal of Holocaust denial and revision." Cassidy then lists the key questions he felt were raised about the document. They are:

1. The Relationship between the Christian Anti-Judaism and Racial Anti-Semitism

Christians established the ghettos in medieval times, only abolishing them in the late 19th century. These ghettos "became in Nazi Germany the antechambers" of the concentration camps. Likewise, the Nazis used past Christian anti-Jewish teaching and symbols "to justify their deadly campaign ... A part of the indifference shown toward the mass deportations and brutality ... was the result of the age-old attitudes of Christian society and preaching toward those considered responsible for the death of Jesus ... Pastors and those in authority in the Church ... deformed peoples' attitudes (for which) they bear a heavy responsibility."

2. The Distinction between the Church and its Members ("sons and daughters")

The latter, as we have seen above, includes all levels of the Church, from the laity to the hierarchy and the papacy. But the Church, understood to be the mystical Body of Christ, cannot be considered sinful.

3. The Defense of Pope Pius XII (footnote 16)

"History will surely find guilty those who could have acted or spoken and did not." At present, though, the statement could only advise a cautious approach because "we did not have the in-

formation" necessary to judge the Pope. This seems to be a reference by Cardinal Cassidy to the urgent need to release all of the documentation in the Vatican archives relating to its dealings with the attacks on the Jews during World War II. Eleven volumes have been released, and while this is commendable, as the Cardinal notes, it is not sufficient. There is absolutely no cogent reason, in this writer's view, to wait until the entire pontificate is catalogued and bound for scholarly research. The essential documents that should be released immediately, are the materials from 1939 through 1946. At the time of this writing, there is no more urgent need in Catholic-Jewish relations, and no real reason given by the Holy See to withhold this vital information.

Cardinal Cassidy concludes with a brief section on "Looking Toward a Common Future." Official "declarations are not enough," he emphasizes. Our "past history questions us." We Christians must "kneel before God in the presence of the victims of all times, to ask pardon and to hope for reconciliation." I would note here, again, that Cardinal Cassidy does not ask the Jews for forgiveness, but God, in the presence of the Jews, who he asks for reconciliation. Again, this is to acknowledge that in Judaism only the victim can forgive a crime against her or himself. To ask the Jewish survivors to forgive in the name of the dead would have been in itself a great insult to them. Cassidy concludes: "If we can heal the wounds that bedevil Catholic-Jewish relations, we would contribute to the healing of the wounds of the world, *tikkun olam*."

Catholic Teaching on the Shoah

Implementing the Holy See's *We Remember*

U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

February 2001

The document designed to guide and assist Catholic teachers dealing with the *Shoah* in the classroom on all levels, from primary grades through to university level, was developed by the USCCB's Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (BCEIA) and approved for publication by the Administrative Committee of the USCCB at its September 2000 meeting.¹⁹ In this United States statement one can see something of the further history of the development of the major themes of *We Remember* and how it is, today, to be properly understood and interpreted.²⁰ One key to understanding the American document, and by reflex the proper interpretation of that of the Holy See, is to view both through the prism of Cardinal Cassidy's address to the American Jewish Committee.

The United States bishops begin *Catholic Teaching on the Shoah* with a quote from Pope John Paul II at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem during his historic visit to Israel in 2000, speaking of the need for silence and the need for memory, in his case "my memories of personal friends." "Men, women and children cry out to us from the depths of the horror they knew. How can we fail to heed their cry? No one can forget or ignore what happened. No one can diminish its scale ... We remember for a purpose, to ensure that never again will evil prevail as it did for the millions of innocent victims of Nazism."²¹

The Pope's statement at Yad Vashem in turn echoes the prayer of repentance for the Church's sins committed against the Jews that he prayed in the Penitential Liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica on the first Sunday of Lent in the millennial year, 2000. This "Confession of Sins against the People of Israel," was one of seven categories of sins which summarized the sinfulness of Catholics during the Second Millennium, in preparation for the beginning of the Third. It was prefaced by a prayer led by Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy: "Let us pray that, recalling the sufferings endured by the people of Israel throughout history, Christians will acknowledge the sins committed by not a few of their number against the people of the Covenant and the blessings, and in this way will purify their hearts." The Pope then prayed:

God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your Name to the Nations. We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who, in the course of history, have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.²²

In a gesture redolent with symbolism, a gesture which touched the hearts of millions of Jews and Catholics around the world, the Pope on March 26, 2000, like any humble Jew over the centuries, placed this petition for divine forgiveness into the Western Wall.

Following their evocation of the Pope leading the whole Church in acts of repentance, the United States bishops briefly describe the process of developing their document. In early 1999, the BCEIA, the AJC and the Archdiocese of Baltimore co-sponsored a dialogue among leading Jewish and Catholic educators involved in Holocaust education, fifteen from each tradition, which discussed the historical, education and theological issues that most needed to be wrestled with in the classroom. Early drafts of what became *Catholic Teaching on the Shoah* were shown to an even wider group and finalized by the BCEIA after its own discussions of the text.

Why Do Catholics Study the *Shoah*?

Essentially, Catholics need to and must study the Holocaust because of the role of centuries of Christian teaching that "so lulled the consciences of so many European Christians that they were not able to organize an effective resistance to Nazi genocide."²³ This must not be allowed to happen again. *We Remember* cited two "essential and overriding reasons for Catholic education to grapple with the *Shoah* as part of its central curriculum," i.e. not as an optional addition but part of its basic mandate. First, "the Shoah was a war against the Jews as the People of God, the first Witnesses to God's Revelation and the eternal bearers of that witness. It is not accidental that the first direct physical attack on the Jews, *Kristallnacht*, came in 1938 in the form of the burning of synagogues ... Only by eliminating the moral inhibitions of Judaism and Christianity could Nazism be able to recreate humanity in its own warped racist image and likeness"²⁴ and bring about an eschatological thousand year Reich (Kingdom) to take the place of the Kingdom of God envisioned by Judaism and Christianity as the consummation of human history with the coming of the Messiah, whose role, of course, is to be taken by Adolf Hitler.

The second compelling reason to make Holocaust education part of the core curriculum is so that the “spoiled seeds of anti-Judaism will never again take root in any human heart.”²⁵

Four Goals for *Shoah* Education in a Catholic Context

1. To provide accurate knowledge of and respect for Judaism, in light of the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish People, and of the spiritual bond of kinship between Jews and Catholics.
2. To develop a positive appreciation of the ongoing role of Judaism in God’s plan of salvation ... a role not exhausted in preparing the way for and giving birth to Jesus ... joint witnessing to the Law and the Prophets, and to the memory of the *Shoah* (*memoria future*).
3. To promote repentance/*teshuvah* through ongoing study in Catholic schools and universities of the relationship between the Christian teaching of contempt and Nazi persecution.
4. To arm Catholics for the ongoing fight against anti-Judaism and racial anti-Semitism.²⁶

Framing Issues Properly

Catholic Teaching then quotes from the introduction by Archbishop Alexander Bruntett, then chair of the BCEIA, to *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*:

Fr. John F. Hotchkin²⁷ observed that the *Shoah* raises in a most awful way the darkest questions the mystery of evil has put to the human family in our time. We may never get to the bottom of these questions ... but what we cannot explain we must nevertheless remember. The warning contained in the memory is our best common shield and defense. The evil still lurks in the world. It does not rest and neither must we ... This is a cataclysm unlike any other in human history ... Those who perished ... (must) shield the living.²⁸

The issues, the bishops continue, “need to be framed for Catholic students with care and concern.” Many in Europe could not comprehend what was happening. So unprecedented was it that a new word, “genocide,” had to be coined, in 1945, to describe it. Others did understand, however, and fought against the genocide. These rescuers, “a few islands of light in a continent overwhelmed in the darkness of evil,” provide a “necessary model for future generations.”²⁹ *Catholic Teaching* then synthesizes in an educational mode the three characteristics most common to rescuers presented by Cardinal Keeler at the United States Holocaust Museum in April 1997: (a) a deep sense of morality, (b) a belief that life has ultimate meaning beyond the present, and (c) a prior positive acquaintance with Jews. “From this we learn the importance of building human bonds across religious, racial, and ethnic lines.”³⁰

Distinctions and Connections: Theological and Historical

As we have seen, avoiding such phrases as “the Church as such” and using “sons and daughters” were not intended by Pope John Paul II or by *We Remember* to absolve the Church as a human institution of guilt or Catholics of a sense of collective responsibility but rather to preserve the integrity of the theological understanding of the Church as the “Body of Christ,” whose head, Christ, cannot be said to have sinned. Similarly, while “a few” did reach out as

rescuers, “all too many” did not and were either perpetrators (the minority of baptized European Christians) or passive observers (the majority), having sufficient reason to know what was going on but either too fearful or too indifferent to act upon that knowledge. There does exist a valid distinction between Christian anti-Judaism and Nazi racial hatred, but the former did pave the way for the latter, a necessary cause but not a sufficient cause, as the very different reactions of Christians in different countries, with their differing cultures and histories, shows, as we have seen.³¹

Guilt and Responsibility

This is a most critical distinction, as we have seen. While Catholics outside of Europe, and even some within Europe, had or have, for various reasons, no personal guilt for the attempted genocide of the Jews, all Catholics, everywhere, must assume responsibility for what was perpetrated by so many Catholics as a result, to a great extent, of Church teaching and practice over the centuries. If we Catholics can spiritually enjoy the merits of our saints and invoke them in our prayers, we must be equally prepared to acknowledge our shared responsibility for the heinous crimes of our sinners. Accepting this, we can reach out to Jews with “a firm resolve to build a new future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians.” The United States bishops’ document, interestingly, omits the continuing phrase that is in *We Remember* about “anti-Christianity among Jews.” I believe this is valid. Jewish anti-Christianity is of a different order and rooted in centuries of experience as victims of Christian persecution. *We Remember* cannot validly make the two phenomena equivalent.³²

The document goes on to give “Suggestions for Teaching Courses on the *Shoah*”³³ and “Pedagogical Issues,”³⁴ and ways to integrate Holocaust education insights and challenges into courses on Church history, Patristics, liturgy, ethics/morality, and homiletics.³⁵ It concludes that “these issues need to be integrated into other parts of the daily life of Catholic educational institutions through special events such as commemorations of *Yom Hashoah* (the Jewish day of remembering the victims of the Holocaust), film showings, drama, art exhibits, colloquia and public lectures, joint pilgrimages and retreats with Jewish clergy and laity, and faculty and student exchanges.” I would add to this listing all of our schools including our colleges and universities, but especially our seminaries and rabbinical schools.

Final Reflection

A document of the Holy See is not made up just of the words that are in it. It has a pre-history and a post-history, a tradition, if you will, which helps to interpret it correctly, much as is true of statements of ecumenical councils or, for that matter, Sacred Scripture. In the case of *We Remember* these surrounding interpretive statements and especially that of its signer, Cardinal Cassidy, and of subsequent framings of the Church’s repentance for its past mistreatment of Jews and Judaism, are especially crucial in coming to a proper understanding of how to read the document correctly and to implement it locally. I trust that the present paper has been of some help to the reader in achieving those goals.

Dr. Eugene J. Fisher was Associate Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). He was appointed by Pope John Paul II as Consultor to the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

ENDNOTES

¹ The term, "anti-Semitism," was coined by the inventors of racial anti-Semitism to make it appear to be scientific and objective. "Semite," however is not even a racial term but simply designates those who speak, or spoke, a Semitic language such as Hebrew, Aramaic or Arabic. Since there is no such thing as "Semitism," many scholars in the field of Jewish-Christian studies today eschew the capital "S" and the hyphen and prefer the spelling, "anti-Semitism."

² For texts and commentary, see Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki, editors, *Spiritual Pilgrimage: Pope John Paul II, Texts and Addresses on Jews and Judaism, 1979-1995* (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1995).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 100.

⁵ Ibid., 100-101.

⁶ Ibid., 157. Note that Cardinal Cassidy and the Pope used the same Hebrew word, *teshuvah*, in different ways. Like the word, *shalom*, which has a range of related meanings from "peace" to "wholeness" to "good health", *teshuvah* can mean "repentance" and "conversion of the heart" leading to "reconciliation." The Hebrew in this case comes from a basic meaning of "turning", as in turning (back) to God after having sinned, or turning back to a fellow human being after having sinned against him or her.

⁷ Eastern Europe in general and Poland in particular were places where Jews expelled from all the countries of Western Europe, except Italy (because of papal mandates protecting them), from the 12th to the 15th centuries, found refuge and new lives. In Polish-Jewish culture, Poland was called by its Jews *Pardes*, which is Hebrew for "Paradise," so well did they feel they were being welcomed and treated there.

⁸ Fisher and Klenicki, *op. cit.*, 189.

⁹ Among those who died because of the Swiss slowness to accept refugees were St. Edith Stein and her sister, both of Jewish origin, who had applied for asylum and were waiting for permission when the Dutch bishops spoke out against the deportation of Jews from Holland. Originally from Germany, they were picked up among the numerous Dutch Jewish converts to Catholicism who were picked up and sent to the death camps in the German reprisal against the statement of the Dutch bishops.

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, nos. 33 and 36.

¹¹ "Blessed" indicates that Fr. Lichtenberg has been beatified, the first step in the process of canonization, or declaring someone a saint.

¹² Cf. <http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol2/iss2/6/>

¹³ One of the nicest things about Roman Catholicism is its honesty in calling Rome the Eternal City and not trying to pretend that it has in any way displaced the one Holy City for Jews and Christians, and in another sense for Muslims, Jerusalem.

¹⁴ *Nostra Aetate*, no. 4.

¹⁵ Cf. Derek Hastings, *Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism: Religious Identity & National Socialism* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ Italy, under direct papal control, was the only country in Western Europe that did not expel its Jews during the period from the 12th to the 19th Centuries.

¹⁷ I was asked by Cardinal Cassidy to serve as the Catholic Coordinator for one such study, that of the International Catholic-Jewish Historical Committee which was charged with studying the eleven volumes of the published Vatican archives pertaining to the Holocaust and the role of the Church during it, which did its work from December of 1999 through August of 2001. The efforts and conclusions of this team of three Jewish and three Catholic scholars have often been misunderstood. The text of its "Preliminary Report," four of the papers produced by the scholars who had had made intense analyses of individual volumes (which were then presented to the group as a whole and discussed in detail), and the correspondence between the group and the Holy See, and related articles, a bibliography and list of further resources, are contained a special issue of the journal, *Catholic International: The Documentary Window on the World* (Vol. 13, no. 2; May, 2002) 49-102.

¹⁸ Note, again, the use by Cardinal O'Connor of "many," while the text of *We Remember* can be read as indicting only "some."

¹⁹ Previous statements designed to implement documents of the Holy See with regard to Catholic-Jewish relations include *Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations*, BCEIA, 1967, revised 1985; *Criteria for the Evaluation of Dramatizations of*

the Passion, BCEIA 1986; and *God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching*, Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, 1987. The latter two represented the local, American Church's implementation of the 1985 Vatican *Notes on the Correct Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching and Teaching*.

²⁰ The United States enjoys the world's largest Jewish population and its most active Catholic-Jewish dialogue. Of some 30 organizations dedicated to furthering the dialogue which are members of the Council of Centers of Jewish-Christian Relations (CCJR), 25 are affiliated with Catholic universities, so that the statements of the American bishops on the subject tend to have international as well as local diocesan and national influence.

²¹ Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, *Catholic Teaching on the Shoah: Implementing the Holy See's **We Remember*** (Washington, DC: U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001) 1-2.

²² *Universal Prayer, Confession of Sins and Asking for Forgiveness*, March 12, 2000, from the website www.vatican.va.

²³ *Catholic Teaching on the Shoah*, cit., 3, referencing John Paul II, "Speech to Symposium on the Roots of Anti-Judaism, October 31, 1997. *L'Osservatore Romano* 6:1 (November 6, 1997).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4, quoting *We Remember*, section 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁷ Rev. John F. Hotchkin, of blessed memory, was, until 2001, the director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and my friend and mentor.

²⁸ *Catholic Teaching*, 5, quoting *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*, 2.

²⁹ *Catholic Teaching*, 6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8-10.

³² *Ibid.*, 11.

³³ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

WHY HISTORY MATTERS FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS



BY JOHN T. PAWLIKOWSKI, O.S.M.

1. The *Turn toward History* and Christian Anti-Semitism

One of the most important developments in Christian theology over the past several decades has been what David Tracy has termed the “turn toward history.”¹ The work of the Second Vatican Council is one example of this turn. For the Council was not satisfied in issuing a statement on the Church couched in more classical theological language but insisted on a companion document, *Gaudium et Spes*, which established the Church’s location within human history as a foundation for ecclesial understanding. History has now become an indispensable font for theological reflection in our day. As a result any theological reflection on the relationship of the Church and the Jewish People must be rooted in historical awareness. Bernard Lonergan and Charles Curran² have each highlighted this important methodological shift in Catholic theology coming out of the Council, particularly in such documents as *Gaudium et Spes* (the Church in the Modern World) and *Dignitatis Humanae* (the Declaration on Religious Liberty).

In terms of relations with Jews, a theology shaped by a historical consciousness must recognize the Church’s centuries-long record of contemptuous teachings against Jews³ based on the two interrelated premises: (a) that Jews bore responsibility for the death of Christ; and (b) that, as a result, they were expelled from their former covenantal relationship with God and replaced in that relationship by the Christian Church. This theological understanding was not confined to academic realms but had terrible practical consequences for the members of the Jewish community throughout much of European history. While we must continue to maintain a transcendental dimension in ecclesiology since the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, we cannot totally divorce the Church as sacrament from the Church as an incarnate historical institution. The two are profoundly interrelated. Hence the ultimate integrity of the Church is tied to how it has manifested itself concretely throughout human history. And here is where the Church’s treatment of the Jews matters profoundly.

I will not rehearse here the well-documented history of Christian anti-Semitism. That has been done by various scholars such as Edward Flannery,⁴ and Frederick Schweitzer and Marvin Perry.⁵ What is significant about this history is the shadow it places over ecclesiology. No authentic theology of the Church can be put forth today without an honest and thorough confrontation with this dark side of the Church’s life. Because an historical consciousness approach to theological reflection will not permit a sharp separation between what is spoken of by some as “the Church as such,” i.e. the Church as mystical communion, and the institutional manifestation of the Church, this longstanding shadow affects the definition of the Church at its very heart. The Church cannot enter into a fully authentic dialogue with the Jewish

community, and cannot present itself and its teaching as a positive moral voice in contemporary society until it has cleansed its soul of its role in contributing to anti-Semitism.

Our present question must now be, how far has the Church come in dealing with the consequences of its anti-Semitic legacy based on its theological claim of covenantal expulsion of the Jews and their substitution by the Christian community in that covenantal relationship? The answer is not far enough.

2. The Second Vatican Council and the Repudiation of Contempt

The Church's declaration on non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, which Gregory Baum has termed the most radical change in the ordinary magisterium of the Church pronounced by Vatican II,⁶ rejected the notion of widespread Jewish culpability for the death of Jesus and affirmed continued Jewish covenantal inclusion after the Christ event. Its principal argument for this major theological about face was based on the teaching of St. Paul in Romans 9-11.

But in my judgment history also played a part, even if behind the scenes. For one, scholars had come to the conclusion that there existed no genuine historical evidence for general Jewish culpability (that some individual Jewish leaders may have had a role remains open for further discussion), while the evidence was strong for the primary responsibility of Pilate and the Roman imperial authorities. But more recent history, namely the experience of the Holocaust, also had an impact. Once more the Church had compelling evidence of the continuing influence of its classic anti-Semitic tradition. Many of those who most strongly promoted the passage of *Nostra Aetate* had direct contact with Christian resistance movements during the Nazi era and became convinced that this anti-Semitic tradition had to be removed from the Church once and for all. Pope John XXIII, who began the process that led to *Nostra Aetate*, was no doubt motivated to place the Jewish question on the conciliar agenda because of his personal experiences in Turkey and France during the war, and as a result of his moving encounter with French Jewish historian and survivor Jules Isaac. Historical reality had hit home during the Council. There was simply no way the Church, having now witnessed the genocidal actions that such a theology could abet, could continue to proclaim Jewish covenantal exclusion. The late Cardinal Avery Dulles and some other Church leaders have argued in recent years that in undertaking this profound theological change at Vatican II the bishops ignored the full evidence of the New Testament. He appealed to the *Epistle to the Hebrews* which he understood as proclaiming the end of the Jewish "old" covenant.⁷ In retrospect it probably would have been better if the Council had confronted these texts from *Hebrews* directly. I would posit that historical evidence may have played some role in their sidelining. Having known and experienced the negative effect of such theological claims there was simply no way the drafters could continue to use them as defining texts for the theology of the Christian-Jewish relationship. So I would want to argue that historical consciousness may have been an important factor in moving the theology of the Church's relationship with the Jewish People to a base in *Paul* rather than in *Hebrews*.

It should be noted however, that many important biblical scholars have questioned the

classical interpretation of *Hebrews* as arguing for the abolition of the Jewish covenant after Christ. Both Alan Mitchell⁸ and Luke Timothy Johnson,⁹ in major recent volumes on *Hebrews*, have argued that it is a letter directed exclusively to Christians to sustain their faith and does not discuss the ongoing validity of the Jewish covenant per se. This biblical scholarship disallows the attempt by Cardinal Dulles to interject *Hebrews* back into a discussion of the theology of the Christian-Jewish relationship over against Vatican II's reliance on *Romans 9-11*.¹⁰

Recent years have seen some notable efforts on the part of Christians, including Christian leaders, to deal with the history of anti-Semitism. During the nineties some nine hierarchies in various parts of Europe and in the United States issued statements which acknowledged a measure of culpability.¹¹ The strongest declaration by far came from the French Catholic bishops in September 1997. They clearly saw their admission of responsibility as a necessary step of cleansing and healing in preparation for the new millennium. The French bishops said,

[I]t is a well-proven fact ... that for centuries, up until Vatican Council II, an anti-Jewish tradition stamped its mark in different ways on Christian doctrine and teaching, in theology, apologetics, preaching, and in the liturgy. It was on such ground that the venomous plant of hatred for the Jews was able to flourish. Hence, the heavy inheritance we still bear in our century, with all its consequences.¹²

The document clearly admits the failure of Church authorities to challenge this anti-Semitic shadow on Christian theology and practice in the following:

For the most part those in authority in the Church caught up in a loyalism and docility which went far beyond the obedience traditionally accorded civil authorities, remained stuck in conformity, prudence, and abstention. This was dictated in part by their fear of reprisals against the Church's activities and youth movements. They failed to realize that the Church, called at that moment to play the role of defender within a social body that was falling apart, did in fact have considerable power and influence, and that in the face of the silence of other institutions, its voice could have echoed loudly by taking a definitive stand against the irreparable catastrophe.¹³

Pope John Paul II, who brought an historical consciousness orientation to Catholic self-understanding although (as Charles Curran has rightly noted) not to the same extent as Paul VI, did turn to *Gaudium et Spes* on many occasions for his vision of the Church and he did see the necessity for the Church to expose and atone for its failings in several areas at the dawn of a new millennium. He forthrightly addressed the issue of the Church's deeply flawed outlook on Jews and Judaism during the liturgical ceremony he sponsored in Rome in March 2000 and then again during his historic visit to Israel where he placed the same admission of guilt in the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

3. Discomfort with Confronting History

John Paul II also approved the publication in March 1998 of the statement on the Holocaust, *We Remember*, for which he wrote an Introduction.¹⁴ This statement was not without some controversy, largely because of certain revisions imposed by the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, upon the original version of the text that had been prepared by

Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, then President of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.¹⁵ These controversial alterations exaggerated the number of Christians who spoke out against Nazism and risked their lives to save Jews, and presented only the positive efforts of Pope Pius XII on behalf of Jews, without addressing lingering problematic issues. But this document did make it quite clear that many Christians failed in their responsibilities during the Holocaust. Furthermore, as Cardinal Cassidy clarified in subsequent presentations on *We Remember*, the document did not exempt the highest ecclesiastical authorities from such failures of responsibility.

Theologically, a pivotal statement in *We Remember* has to do with how Christian responsibility is described. Culpability is basically assigned to a group of "wayward Christians" who by implication deviated from what the Church clearly taught about Jews and Judaism. First of all, it is hard to accept the notion that culpability resided exclusively within a group of Christian deviants who were somehow led astray by false preachers. Scholarship has clearly established how central the anti-Jewish teachings were in Christian preaching and Church art for centuries and in more recent centuries in basic educational materials. So to place Christian culpability only on a group of marginal members of the Christian community is to falsify the historical record.

The deeper theological challenge comes from the strict separation in *We Remember* between the so-called "Church as such" and the actual historical institution. Clearly this indicates a distancing from an ecclesiology which regards the manifestation of the sacramental Church in a concrete historical institution present in *Gaudium et Spes* and in the writings of Pope Paul VI. Here is an example of the ambiguity in the thought of Pope John Paul II who, as Charles Curran has stressed, did in the main continue the historical orientation of Pope Paul VI but moved away from that perspective at certain critical moments. This is one such critical moment. Cardinal Francis George, in a public conference in Chicago on *We Remember*, relayed details of a personal conversation he had with Pope John Paul II on this point. Cardinal George indicated that the pope was adamant that "the Church as such" could never be implicated in any way in the evil of the Holocaust.¹⁶

Early in his pontificate Pope Benedict XVI seemed to move away from the historical consciousness operative in the work of Pope Paul VI and retained in part by Pope John Paul II. For instance, he seldom draws on *Gaudium et Spes* in his writings and statements. Though he has on several occasions promised to continue to walk on the path laid out by John Paul II, we in fact see his taking a quite different road on the question of Christian responsibility during the Holocaust. Pope Benedict XVI's first social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, issued on June 29, 2009, does show some thrust on his part towards recognizing history as a font for theological understanding. Pope Benedict XVI also recognized there that social/political institutions influence basic spirituality. But one also senses a certain tension within the encyclical with Pope Benedict's more common emphasis on theological truth that remains unaffected by history. The number of times that *truth* is highlighted in the document is striking. Unlike Pope

Paul VI who proclaimed an open and potentially changing perspective on the Catholic approach to social institutions, Benedict left the impression that the ideal social institutions have been defined by natural law and are in place for the duration of human history.¹⁷ I think the encyclical shows his struggling to mesh his newfound and genuine commitment to social justice with his longstanding commitment to unchanging theological truth.

Despite his unfortunate rescinding in 2009 of the excommunication of four bishops belonging to the Society of Saint Pius X, including the noted Holocaust denier Bishop Richard Williamson, Pope Benedict never belittles the significance of the Holocaust. In his visit to the synagogue in Cologne during World Youth Day in the summer of 2005 and in his statement at the Birkenau extermination camp in late May 2006, he certainly acknowledged the horrors of the Holocaust. He made his own the January 2005 words of John Paul II that marked the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz camp, of which Birkenau is considered an integral part: "I bow my head before all those who experienced this manifestation of the *mysterium iniquitatis*. The terrible events of that time," the pope continued, "must never cease to rouse consciences, to resolve conflicts, to inspire the building of peace."¹⁸ There is little doubt that Pope Benedict views the Holocaust as one of the darkest moments in European history. In his remarks to a general audience on November 30, 2005, he termed the Holocaust an "infamous project of death."¹⁹ And on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of Kristallnacht, he once again expressed horror over the sufferings endured by Jews under Hitler and rededicated himself to combating any continued manifestation of anti-Semitism. This statement was meaningful because the pope spoke directly in a significant way to the Jewish character of the Holocaust rather than describe it in more generic terms as an attack on all humanity. He reiterated this in his April 2009 message to American Jewish leaders, a message spoken with intensity according to Rabbi David Rosen, then Chair of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultation (ICJIC), who was present at the meeting: "The entire human race feels deep shame at the savage brutality shown to your people at that time."²⁰

Nonetheless in the discussion of the root causes of the Holocaust, Pope Benedict tends to avoid Pope John Paul II's approach. In part this may be because of their differing personal experiences of the Holocaust. But it is also probably rooted to a greater extent in their considerably different ecclesiological perspectives, namely, Pope Benedict's strongly emphasizing the transcendent understanding of the Church as basically unaffected by events in human history. As Cardinal Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI did give some indication of an understanding of the link between traditional Christian anti-Semitism and the ability of the Nazis to carry out their program of Jewish extermination. In a front page article in the December 19, 2000, issue of *L'Osservatore Romano*, he argued, "it cannot be denied that a certain insufficient resistance to this atrocity on the part of Christians can be explained by the inherited anti-Judaism in the hearts of not a few Christians."²¹ This remains, however, a rather isolated text in his overall corpus. And in comparison to several of the episcopal conference texts cited earlier (especially the French) it appears quite weak. Pope Benedict has tended to present the Holocaust as pri-

marily, even exclusively, a neo-pagan phenomenon which had no roots in Christianity but instead constituted a fundamental attack on all religious belief, including Christianity.

No reputable scholar on the Holocaust would deny the neo-pagan roots of Nazism or Nazism's fundamental opposition to all religious perspectives, and I count myself among them. But equally, they would insist on surfacing the Holocaust's significant links with classical Christian anti-Semitism. The Holocaust succeeded in a culture that supposedly was deeply rooted and influenced by Christian values for centuries. Much of the Nazi anti-Jewish legislation replicated laws against Jews existing in "Christendom" since medieval times. I have always opposed drawing a simple straight line between classical Christian anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Clearly the Nazi program depended on modern philosophy and pseudo-scientific racist theories. But we cannot obfuscate the fact that traditional Christianity provided an indispensable seedbed for the widespread support, or at least acquiescence, on the part of large numbers of baptized Christians during the Nazi attack on the Jews and other marginalized groups. Christian anti-Semitism definitely had a major role in undergirding Nazism in its plan for Jewish extermination and perhaps also in the Nazi treatment of other victim groups such as the disabled, the Roma and Sinti gypsies, and gay people.

In his Cologne and Birkenau addresses, Pope Benedict seemed to be supporting an interpretation of the Holocaust which presents it solely as an attack on religion in all its forms rather than a phenomenon that drew strongly on a previous anti-Semitic base in the heart of Christianity. His remarks can leave the impression, intended or not, that the Holocaust was simply the result of secularizing modern forces in Europe at the time of the Nazis and not dissimilar from the secularizing modern forces that affect Europe today, forces that Benedict has assailed for many years. The fact that neither in the Cologne nor in the Birkenau addresses is there any reference made to the official 1998 Vatican document on the Holocaust, *We Remember*, nor to the earlier national bishops' statements, tends to confirm this interpretation of Pope Benedict's perspective. Meira Scherer-Edmunds, in an article in *U.S. Catholic*, described the papal visit to the synagogue in Cologne as a "milestone" but also a "missed opportunity" because of the pope's failure to deal forthrightly with Christian culpability during the Nazi era.²² The editors of *Commonweal* offered a similar critique of the Pope's address at Birkenau,²³ a critique I subsequently supported in a published letter to the magazine.²⁴ Finally, in his initial response to the controversy caused by the remarks of Bishop Richard Williamson of the Society of St. Pius X regarding the Holocaust, the Pope, while condemning the Holocaust in no uncertain terms, once again spoke of it in general terms and made no reference to the collaboration of Catholics in carrying out Hitler's genocidal attack against the Jews.

In his speech at the synagogue in Rome on January 17, 2010, Pope Benedict finally broke his silence on the issue of Christian complicity in the Holocaust. In his speech he made his own the often-quoted words of Pope John Paul II, first spoken in the liturgical ceremony for the new millennium held in Rome on the first Sunday of Lent 2000.

God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your Name to the Nations. We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who, in the course of

history, have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.

Pope Benedict then repeated those words in May in a message placed in the historic Western Wall in Jerusalem during his visit to Jerusalem. This statement expresses repentance for Catholic collaboration with anti-Semitism over the centuries, including during the Nazi era. It would have been preferable though, in my judgment, if the Pope had said this in his own words, particularly given his German background. Nonetheless, his embrace of John Paul's statement of repentance represents his first real step towards acknowledging Catholic complicity during the period of the Holocaust.

In dealing with the question of the Church and history in light of the Holocaust we must take up the issue raised by Austrian philosopher Friedrich Heer (1916-1983). For Heer, Catholicism's failure to confront adequately the Holocaust is symptomatic of how Catholicism has reacted to all other evils, especially to war and to the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. For him, the main problem stems from the Church's withdrawal from history. He offers the following:

The withdrawal of the Church from history has created that specifically Christian and ecclesiastical irresponsibility towards the world, the Jew, the other person, even the Christian himself, considered as a human being-which was the ultimate cause of past catastrophes and may be the cause of a final catastrophe in the future.²⁵

For Heer, anti-Semitism has been the historical manifestation of a much deeper cancer in Christianity that was manifested in classical Christianity. The disregard of the fate of the Jewish people throughout history, especially between 1918 and 1945, can only be understood, he claims, as part of a general disregard for humanity and the world. He primarily attributes this disregard to the dominance in Christian theology of the so-called "Augustinian principle" which views the world under the aspect of sin and which ultimately leads to a sense of fatalism and despair about the world.²⁶ According to Heer in a work originally published in 1967, this fatalistic tendency is as great a danger as it was in the period of the incubation of Nazism, especially from 1933-45. He writes: "There is a straight line from the Church's failure to notice Hitler's attempt at a *Final Solution* of the Jewish problem to her failure to notice today's and tomorrow's endeavors to bring about a 'Final Solution' to the human problem."²⁷ While Heer had nuclear warfare in mind when he penned these words, he might well apply them today to the ecological challenge in global society. The only cure for this centuries-long pattern in Christianity, according to Heer, is to abandon the Augustinian principle and replace it with a return to the Hebrew Bible's roots of Christ's own piety and to even older roots namely, to the original faith in which people felt themselves to be both God's creature and responsible partner. In other words to the strongly based spirituality found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Pope John Paul II's use of the term "co-creators" for the human community in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* might in fact be seen as an important example of such a return to this spirituality.

4. Rethinking Christian Theologies

To my mind there is little question that the greatest challenge posed to Christians in dialogue with Judaism is coming to grips with the history of anti-Semitism. Pope John Paul II named anti-Semitism as a sin on several occasions.²⁸ Therefore, the Church will need to commit itself to a complete and honest evaluation of its record in this regard. We do have a model for such ecclesial self-examination, one praised by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin in his major address at Hebrew University on March 23, 1995.²⁹ Cardinal Bernardin highlighted the effort undertaken by the Archdiocese of Lyon in France for a thorough investigation of archdiocesan records during the Nazi period by respected scholars. Bernardin insisted that such investigations were crucial for the Church to enter dialogue with Jews with credibility as well as for its ability to speak with credibility to major issues of our day in global society.

Cardinal Bernardin's words remain prophetic. It certainly will not prove easy for institutional Catholicism to undertake such a comprehensive self-examination. But it has little choice in my judgment. What occurred in Lyon must become commonplace, including at the level of the Vatican, if the Church is to have an authentic moral voice in society.

In light of the experience of the Holocaust ecclesiological understanding in Catholicism needs revamping. Scholars such as Johann-Baptist Metz have begun this.³⁰ Such revamping needs to take seriously the point made by Donald Dietrich in his volume *God and Humanity: Jewish-Christian Relations and Sanctioned Murder*. Dietrich argues that "the Holocaust has reemphasized the need to highlight the person as *the* central factor in the social order to counterbalance state power."³¹ Put another way, any authentic notion of ecclesiology after the experience of the Holocaust must make human rights a central component. The vision of the Church that must direct post-Holocaust Christian thinking is one that sees the survival of all persons as integral to the authentic survival of the Church itself. Jews, Poles, Roma and Sinti, gays, and the disabled should not have been viewed as unfortunate expendables during the Nazi period, and there is no place for any similar classification today. There is no way for Christianity, or any other religious tradition, to survive meaningfully if it allows the death or suffering of other people to become a byproduct of its efforts at self-preservation. Surely for Christians a communal sense of ethics must accompany the commitment to personal human rights. But no communal ethical vision can ever remove personal human rights from the center of its concern.

Other areas of systematic theology must be rethought in light of the Holocaust. One is our understanding of God and the divine-human relationship. Theologians such as Rebecca Chopp and David Tracy have argued that historical realities such as the Holocaust force us to restate basic doctrinal beliefs. Dogma, following upon Donald Dietrich's assertions, needs to become person-centered. It is not possible to give a detailed treatment of this topic in this essay. I have addressed both the God question after the Holocaust and its implications for the foundation for Christian ethics, and the issue of Christology in other published writings.³² Suffice it to say here that all dogmatic formulations after the Holocaust must include a re-

sponse dimension within the ongoing historical process. Dogma and history must be integrated with each influencing the other, as was argued by several scholars including myself in an issue of the international theological publication *Concilium* titled, "The Holocaust as Interruption."³³ A movement in this direction can also be found in the December 1999 declaration from the Vatican's International Theological Commission (promulgated in March 2000) which was in fact commissioned by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger who headed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at that time.³⁴

The philosopher Hannah Arendt's critical question in *On Revolution* as to whether Christianity can be revolutionary needs to receive an affirmative response from the Church.³⁵ Only in this way can Friedrich Heer's legitimate concern about Christianity's withdrawal from history be alleviated. Christological interpretation cannot eliminate the possibility of newness in human history.

5. The Parting of the Ways

The final issue I would raise in this paper regarding the history-theology link has to do with the profound reimagining of the separation between Judaism and Christianity. Over the last decade or more biblical and historical scholarship, some of it associated with what has been termed "The Parting of the Ways" research, has shown us how much Jesus himself and "the followers of the Way" remained integrated within the Jewish community of their time and how gradual and protracted the eventual separation really was. Can we continue to present the Church as a distinct, separate institution founded by Jesus prior to his death? I frankly do not think we can even though we continue to proclaim that message on Holy Thursday in particular. Our theological assertions in this regard must become far more nuanced in light of the new historical research.³⁶ Admittedly such a reformulation will test the faith of many in the Church. And it will also increasingly face a methodological challenge as certain Catholic leaders increasingly insist that the tradition of the Church must take precedence over new scientific evidence. While I would agree that faith is not totally or exclusively dependent on scientific research, neither can contemporary faith expression ignore the results of new scholarship, especially when such new information significantly undercuts previous faith narratives.

Since the question of Jesus' dealings with his Jewish contemporaries is being treated by others, I will take up that issue only insofar as it affects how we perceive the initial Jewish-Christian relationship at its origins. And there is no question that historical scholarship on the first centuries of the Jewish-Christian interaction is altering our understanding of that relationship in profound ways. To emphasize this point one important collection of essays looking at this question has been titled *The Ways That Never Parted*.³⁷

Several biblical scholars began a major reconsideration of how early Christians related to Jews even before the emergence of the "Parting of the Ways" scholarship. Robin Scroggs and the late Anthony Saldarini were two prominent examples of this movement towards a fundamental reinterpretation of the separation of the Church and the Jewish community. In the

mid-1980s, Scroggs published his distillation of where the new historical research on the early Christian-Jewish relations was moving.³⁸ He summarized developments under four headings. (a) The reform movement begun by Jesus and continued after his death in Palestine can best be described as a reform movement *within* Judaism. There is little extant evidence during this period that Christians had a separate identity from Jews. (b) The Pauline missionary movement, as Paul understood it, was a Jewish mission which focused on the Gentiles as the proper object of God's call to his people. (c) The Jewish-Roman war period — prior to the end of the Jewish war with the Romans which ended in 70 C.E., there was no such reality as Christianity. Followers of Jesus did not have a self-understanding of themselves as a religion over against Judaism. A distinctive Christian identity only began to emerge after the Jewish-Roman war. And (d) the post Jewish-Roman war — a subsequent movement toward limited separation — later sections of the New Testament all show some signs of a movement towards separation, but they also generally retain some contact with their Jewish matrix.

Anthony Saldarini added to the emerging picture painted by Scroggs. In various essays he underlined the continuing presence of the “followers of the Way” within the wide tent of Judaism in the first centuries of the Common Era. Saldarini especially underscored the ongoing nexus between Christian communities and their Jewish neighbors in Eastern Christianity whose theological outlook is most often ignored in presentations about the early Church within Western Christian theology.³⁹

The initial scholarship on this issue by Scroggs and Saldarini was eventually reaffirmed by John Meier in the third volume of his comprehensive study of New Testament understandings of Jesus. Meier argues that from a careful examination of the New Testament evidence Jesus must be seen as presenting himself to the Jewish community of his time as an eschatological prophet and miracle worker in the likeness of Elijah. He was not interested in creating a separatist sect or a holy remnant along the lines of the Qumran sect. But he did envision the development of a special religious community within Israel. The idea that this community “within Israel would slowly undergo a process of separation from Israel as it pursued a mission to the Gentiles in this present world — the long-term result being that his community would become predominantly Gentile itself finds no place in Jesus’ message or practice.”⁴⁰ And a scholar within the “Parting of the Ways” movement, David Frankfurter, has insisted that within the various “clusters” of groups that included Jews and Christian Jews there existed a “mutual influence persisting through late antiquity. There is evidence for a degree of overlap that, all things considered, threatens every construction of an historically distinct ‘Christianity’ before at least the mid-second century.”⁴¹

The growing number of biblical scholars who have become engaged in this “Parting of the Ways” discussion all stress the great difficulty in locating Jesus within an ever-changing Jewish context in the first century. Some speak of “Judaisms” and “Christianities” in the period, almost all involving some mixture of continued Jewish practice with new insights drawn from the ministry and preaching of Jesus. For scholars such as Paula Fredriksen even speak-

ing of “the parting of the ways” is unhelpful because it implies two solid blocks of believers.⁴² The various groups in fact were entangled for at least a couple of centuries. So, as Daniel Boyarin has rightly insisted, we cannot speak of Judaism as the “mother” or the “elder brother” of Christianity.⁴³ Rather what eventually came to be known as Judaism and Christianity in the common era resulted from a complicated “co-emergence” over an extended period of time during which various views of Jesus became predominantly associated with one or two focal points. Many factors contributed to this eventual differentiation including Roman retaliation against “the Jews” for the late-first century revolt against the occupation of Palestine and the development of a strong “against the Jews” (*adversus Iudaeos*) teaching during the patristic era. The “conversion” of Emperor Constantine also proved decisive for the eventual split into two distinctive religious communities.

Clearly this new scholarship poses considerable challenges for two central aspects of Christian theology: Christology and ecclesiology. How do we integrate a profoundly Jewish Jesus into Christological understanding and how do we articulate the origins of the Church? Surely we can no longer glibly assert that “Christ founded the Church” in his own lifetime if we take seriously, as I believe we must, that the Church evolved out of Judaism quite gradually over a couple of centuries and that there was no distinct religious body called “Church” in Jesus’ own lifetime and for decades thereafter. Taking history seriously indeed forces us to re-examine our Christian identity in fundamental ways. Some may advise that we should ignore such implications and continue with traditional expressions of belief. I cannot walk that path. While I would never say my faith is premised solely and exclusively on historical data neither can my faith expression suppress such data. My fundamental understanding of Christology and ecclesiology, as well as my perspective on the theological dimensions of the Christian-Jewish relationship, has been strongly influenced by the historical data spoken of in this essay. And I remain glad it has. Indeed, it could be said that all of the articles in the volume — *The Ways That Never Parted* — are to varying degrees founded on the principle that history is important for the process of doing Christian theology. It is, in fact, recent history that has given rise to the meta-question of this book: how Jewish covenantal life relates to the saving work of Jesus Christ throughout time.

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ENDNOTES

¹ See Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and David Tracy, "The Holocaust as Interruption and the Christian Return to History," in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and David Tracy, eds, *The Holocaust as Interruption*. Concilium 175 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984).

² See Charles E. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891 Present: A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 58-60.

³ Christianity's original negative view of the Jews and Judaism tended to be primarily in the theological realm. But in subsequent centuries it evolved into a perspective rooted in outright hatred we call anti-Semitism rather than the original anti-Judaism based on theological objections.

⁴ Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Anti-Semitism*. Revised and updated edition, with a foreword by Philip A. Cunningham. A Stimulus Book (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2004).

⁵ Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, *Anti-Semitism: Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present* (New York/Houndmills, UK: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2002). Also cf., my essay, John T. Pawlikowski, "Religion as Hatred: Anti-Semitism as a Case Study," *Journal of Hate Studies* 3, no.1 (2003/ 2004): 37-48.

⁶ Gregory Baum, "The Social Context of American Catholic Theology," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 41 (1986): 87.

⁷ Avery Cardinal Dulles, "Evangelization and the Jews," with responses by Mary C. Boys, Philip A. Cunningham and John T. Pawlikowski, *America* 187, no. 12 (21 October 2002): 8-16. See also Albert Cardinal Vanhoye, "The Plan of God is a Union of Love with His People," Address to the World Synod of Bishops, October 6, 2008; Rome: ZENIT News Service. A preliminary English translation is available from http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_22_xii-ordinaria-2008/02_inglese/b05_02.html

⁸ Alan Mitchell, *Hebrews*, Sacra Pagina Series 13, ed. Daniel J. Harrington. A Michael Glazier Book (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 25-28.

⁹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews, a Commentary*, New Testament Library (Louisville and Westminster: John Knox, 2006).

¹⁰ See also elsewhere the essay by Jesper Svartvik, "Reading the Epistle to the Hebrews without Presupposing Supersessionism."

¹¹ These documents can be found in *Catholics Remember the Holocaust* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1998).

¹² *Ibid.*, 34.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁴ The text of *We Remember* can be found *ibid.*, 47-56; available from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_16031998_shoah_en.html

¹⁵ These controversial aspects of *We Remember* were discussed in a conference at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago co-sponsored by the school's Cardinal Bernardin Center and the Tanenbaum Center of New York. The papers from this conference can be found in Judith H. Banki and John T. Pawlikowski, eds., *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives* (Franklin, WI and Chicago: Sheed & Ward, 2001).

¹⁶ For a further discussion of this issue, cf., the essays by Robert Schreiter and Irving Greenberg in Banki and Pawlikowski, *Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust*, 51-80.

¹⁷ For an English text of *Caritas in Veritate*, cf. *Origins* 39:9 (July 16, 2009), 1291-59; available at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html

¹⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, "Visit to Cologne Synagogue," *Origins* 35:12 (September 1, 2005): 206; http://vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/august/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20050819_cologne-synagogue_en.html

¹⁹ "Message to the President of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with Jews on the Occasion of the 400th Anniversary of the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*"; available <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-benedict-xvi/357-b16-05oct26.html>; cf. ZENIT Press Service, Rome, November 9, 2008.

²⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, "Meeting with American Jewish Leaders," *Origins* 38:38 (March 5, 2009): 598.

As quoted in Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue-Unitatis Reintegration, Nostra Aetate* (Rediscovering Vatican II) (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2005), 249.

²¹ Meinrad Scherer-Edmunds, "Never Again! The Pope's Visit to the Cologne Synagogue was both a milestone and a

missed opportunity," *U.S. Catholic* 70:11 (November 2005): 50.

²¹ *Commonweal* 133, no. 12 (16 June 2006): 5.

²² *Commonweal* 133, no. 13 (16 July 2006): 2.

²³ Friedrich Heer, *God's First Love* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1970), 406.

²⁴ Recently there have been some efforts to take another look at Augustine's writings. Paula Fredriksen has done this regarding Judaism in *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York/London: Doubleday, 2008). It is possible we may have to make some distinction between Augustine himself and later Augustinianism in this area.

²⁵ Friedrich Heer, "The Catholic Church and the Jews Today," *Midstream* 17 (May 1971): 20.

²⁶ Pope John Paul II, "The Sinfulness of Anti-Semitism," *Origins* 23:13 (September 5, 1991):204; *Crossing the Threshold*, ed. Vittorio Messori (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 96.

²⁷ Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, "Anti-Semitism: The Historical Legacy and the Continuing Challenge for Christians," *A Blessing to Each Other: Cardinal Joseph Bernardin and the Jewish-Catholic Dialogue* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996), 159.

²⁸ See Johann-Baptist Metz, "Facing the Jews: Christian Theology after Auschwitz," in Fiorenza and Tracy, eds., *The Holocaust as Interruption*, 26 – 33.

²⁹ Donald Dietrich, *God and Humanity in Auschwitz: Jewish-Christian Relations and Sanctioned Murder* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction, 1995), 269.

³⁰ See John T. Pawlikowski, "God: The Foundational Ethical Question after the Holocaust," in Jack Bemporad, John T. Pawlikowski and Joseph Sievers, eds., *Good and Evil after Auschwitz: Ethical Implications for Today* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 2000), 53-66; John T. Pawlikowski, "Christology after the Holocaust," in T. Merrigan and J. Haers, eds., *The Myriad Christ: Plurality and the Quest for Unity in Contemporary Christology* (Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2000), 381-397.

³¹ Fiorenza and Tracy, eds., *The Holocaust as Interruption*.

³² See Section #4 "Historical Judgment and Theological Judgment" of the December 1999 (Promulgated March 2000) from the Vatican's International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*. Available from <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-stateinents/roman~catholic/vatican-curia/281-memory>. Also see Fiorenza and Tracy, eds., *The Holocaust as Interruption*, 26-33.

³³ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1963), 20.

³⁴ On a related note, already in the early 1980s, Karl Rahner pointed out that in light of historical critical exegesis, some aspects of speaking of Jesus as "instituting" the Church had been shown to be problematic: "Our real problem, however, and our real theme is the question: What can we say and *how* can we speak of an institution of the Church by Jesus or its provenance from him, if and although he proclaimed this imminence of the kingdom of God?" *Theological Investigations XLV Faith and Ministry* (London: Dartoll, Longman & Todd Ltd, 1983), 29. Therefore, he preferred the institution of the Church to be understood in the sense that the Church draws its origin from Jesus. Of course, the significance of the Jewishness of Jesus and the early Church for this question had not yet come to the forefront at that time. See also the essays in this volume by Daniel Harrington, Hans Hermann Henrix, and Barbara Meyer.

³⁵ Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., "The Ways That Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," *Texts and Studies in Judaism* #95 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

Also see Matt Jackson-McCabe, ed., "Jewish Christianity Reconsidered," *Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007); Fabian Udoh, ed., *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

³⁶ Robin Scroggs, "The Judaizing of the New Testament," *Chicago Theological Seminary Register* (Winter 1986): 1.

³⁷ Anthony J. Saldarini, "Jews and Christians in the First Two Centuries: The Changing Paradigm," *Shofar* 10 (1992): 32-43; "Christian Anti-Judaism: The First Century Speaks to the Twenty-First Century," The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture 1999 (Chicago: Archdiocese of Chicago, The American Jewish Committee, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies and the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Community Relations Council, 1999).

³⁸ John P. Meier, "A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus," vol. 3, *Companions and Competitors* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 251.

³⁹ David Frankfurter, "Beyond 'Jewish-Christianity': Continuing Religious Sub-Cultures of the Second and Third Centuries and Their Documents," in Becker and Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted*, 132.

⁴⁰ Paula Fredriksen, "What 'Parting of the Ways'? Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City," in Becker and Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted*, 35-64.

⁴¹ Daniel Boyarin, "Semantic Differences; or 'Judaism'/'Christianity'" in Becker and Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted*, 65-85.

SECTION 3
REMEMBERING
CHRISTIAN RESISTANCE

FROM PACIFIST TO CONSPIRATOR

THE ETHICAL JOURNEY OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

■
BY WALTON PADELFORD

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was the sixth child born to Dr. Karl Bonhoeffer and Paula von Hase. There would eventually be eight children in that academic, well-cultured family. Dr. Bonhoeffer, head of a clinic in Breslau at the time of Dietrich's birth on February 4, 1906, would eventually move to Berlin where he would occupy the chair of psychiatry and neurology at the University of Berlin. Dietrich's mother, Paula, was from an aristocratic family. Her father was a professor of theology and court preacher to Kaiser Wilhelm II. In such a family atmosphere the children absorbed great literary works read aloud by their father. Their mother taught them at home during the first years of school, and contributed to their liveliness of mind. The Bonhoeffer's home was open to visitors and guests; aunts, uncles, cousins, students and friends would visit and stay for a few days. It is clear that Dietrich was brought up in one of the elite families in Germany — patriotic, not extravagantly nationalistic, responsible, humanistic, and university-oriented.

In Dietrich's last year of high school he declared his desire to study theology. His father and brothers tried to dissuade him, but with no success. In 1924, at the age of seventeen, Dietrich matriculated at the University of Tübingen where he spent two semesters. He then registered at Berlin University. He wrote his dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio* or *The Communion of Saints* at the incredibly young age of twenty-one. The dissertation was a theological-sociological study of the church with the predominant theme of Christ existing as church-community. Karl Barth, the great Swiss theologian, described it as a "theological miracle" (Kelly & Nelson, 1995: 7). He then began work on *Act and Being* or a qualifying thesis (really a second dissertation) for a post as lecturer. In 1930, at the age of twenty-four, he became the youngest assistant lecturer at the University of Berlin. After a year he received a grant for post-doctoral study at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

While at Union, Dietrich became good friends with Paul and Marion Lehman, Franklin Fisher, and Jean Lasserre. The Lehmans became his close American friends. Through Franklin Fisher, an African-American seminarian, he gained access to the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, where he taught children's classes and participated in the Sunday services on a regular basis. It was here, Bonhoeffer said, "I heard the gospel preached ... Here one really could still hear someone talk in a Christian sense about sin and grace and the love of God and ultimate hope" (Bonhoeffer, 2008: 30). Jean Lasserre was a pacifist. He made Dietrich aware of the radical demands of the Sermon on the Mount so that Dietrich began to take the teachings of Christ in this famous passage very seriously.

In June, 1931, he returned to Berlin where he worked as assistant lecturer in systematic theology at the University of Berlin. One day after arriving twenty minutes late for class,

Professor Bonhoeffer said, "One of my boys is dying, and I wanted to have a last word with him" (Zimmermann, 1966: 66). Bonhoeffer's "boys" were the members of a confirmation class from the working-class suburb of Wedding, to which he had been appointed by his church authorities. On February 1, 1933, two days after Hitler's accession to power, the young lecturer gave a radio broadcast entitled, "The Leader and the Individual in the Younger Generation." The lecture was cut off before completion. It is amazing how early Bonhoeffer saw the way things were going with the Führer, particularly as most of the Protestant church was joyfully falling in line behind Hitler. Already in existence was a Protestant group which called itself "The German Christians." Its aim was to combine Christianity with National Socialism.

In June and July of 1933, the lines in the church struggle were more clearly revealed through the appointment of August Jäger, a Nazi ideologue, as president of the high church council. Bonhoeffer became more radicalized and called for a pastor's strike, i.e. a refusal to perform funerals. His fellow ministers did not agree. Nevertheless, for upcoming church elections Dietrich continued to work hard for candidates of the Young Reformation movement. Through intimidation by the brown shirts, however, National Socialist candidates received over seventy percent of the vote. After this defeat Bonhoeffer preached, "[C]ome ... all of you who are abandoned and left alone, we will go back to the Holy Scriptures, we will go and look for the church together ... Let the church remain the church ... confess, confess, confess!" (Bonhoeffer, 2007: 296). This sermon was an indication that the church might have to enter into a *status confessionis* based on a clear statement of faith in Christ. This is a serious step declaring a state of confessional protest against an ecclesiastical entity which has become herodox, such an entity being in violation of Scripture and the creeds.

In July, the Young Reformation movement decided to write a clear confession. They appointed Bonhoeffer and two other young theologians to work on it. Among other things, the Bethel Confession dealt negatively with the Aryan clause of the civil service law which prohibited anyone of Jewish descent from serving in the German civil service. This affected the churches because ministers were on the payroll of the state and hence members of the German civil service. This clause, if accepted by the church, would make it impossible for Christians of Jewish background to train for the Christian ministry.

The Bethel Confession was coolly received. In the infamous "Brown Synod" the Aryan paragraph was adopted by the national church from which Bonhoeffer withdrew. This was also the end of ministry in the national church for Bonhoeffer's friend, Franz Hildebrandt, and his brother-in-law, Gerhard Leibholz, both of Jewish descent. At this point two thousand pastors signed a resolution to reverse the Aryan clause; among them was Pastor Martin Niemöller, former World War I U-Boat commander, who founded the Pastor's Emergency League to protest inclusion of the Aryan paragraph in the order of the national church. This was a step toward the formation of the Confessing Church.

At this time an offer came to Dietrich to assume the pastorates of two German-speaking congregations in London. He accepted the offer. While there he became good friends with

George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester, and a leader in the ecumenical movement. Bonhoeffer continued to inform Bell and ecumenical leaders of the situation in the churches in Germany, and to impress upon them the need to support the newly forming Confessing Movement. By December of 1933 the youth organizations of the national church had been handed over to the Hitler Youth movement (Wind, 1998: 82). The opposition Confessing Churches entered into *status confessionis*.

Through May 29-31, 1934, opposition churches met in Barmen and agreed upon the famous Barmen declaration which had been written by Karl Barth. In it the Confessing Churches made an evangelical confession of faith and opposed the false doctrine of the German Christians by rejecting: "[T]he false teaching that the church can and must recognize other events, powers, images and truths as divine revelation alongside the one word of God, as a source of its preaching..." (Wind, 1998: 371). The Confessing Church was formed, and the church struggle in Germany entered a new era.

The previous March the Reich Bishop had ordered the seminaries of the Old Prussian Union to be closed. The Confessing Church, therefore, undertook to open its own seminaries. There were eventually five of these institutions. In preparing to train its own pastors, the young firebrand in London was remembered as the best choice to lead in seminary training. Bonhoeffer was appointed to this post on January, 1935, with an agreement to begin his duties in March of that year.

In August of 1934, Dietrich had taken part in the ecumenical youth conference at Fanö, Denmark. It was here that he preached his famous peace sermon using as his text Psalm 85:8, "Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints."

How does peace come about? Through a system of political treaties? Through the investment of international capital in different countries? Or through universal peaceful rearmament in order to guarantee peace? Through none of these, for the sole reason that in all of them peace is confused with safety. There is no way to peace along the way of safety ... Once again how will peace come? ... Only the one great ecumenical council of the holy church of Christ over all the world can speak out so that the world, though it gnash its teeth, will have to hear, so that the peoples will rejoice because the church of Christ in the name of Christ has taken the weapons from the hands of their sons, forbidden war, proclaimed the peace of Christ against the raging world (Bethge, Bethge, & Gremmels, 1986: 133).

Bonhoeffer, no doubt, saw the clouds of war gathering. Preaching peace was connected with the freedom to proclaim the gospel and confess the faith in Germany, for he also foresaw the terrible persecution time coming under Hitler. In other words, pacifism was a means of resisting the Nazi regime.

In April of 1933, he had given a sermon to a group of Berlin pastors in which he outlined the church's degrees of response to a state which disregards basic human rights. First, the church may ask the state if its actions are legitimate *qua* state. Second, the church must aid the victims of wrongful state action even if these victims do not belong to the Christian community. Third, the church should not only bandage the victims under the wheel, but put a

spoke in the wheel itself (Wind, 1998: 69).

In the Fall of 1934, Dietrich became intensely interested in visiting Mohandas Gandhi in India. He wanted to share in his daily life and learn the non-violent methods of resistance that Gandhi was using so successfully against the English colonial power. It is clear here that Bonhoeffer was not only resisting a Nazi heresy in the church, but he was resisting Nazism itself. He was resisting through the force of pacifism and doing apprenticeship for political resistance through his desire to study with Gandhi, although this visit never materialized.

In April of 1935, Dietrich began his duties as seminary instructor. To live together and to learn and to practice the Sermon on the Mount became the *modus operandi* of this seminary of the Confessing Church. This seminary, first located at Finkenwalde near Stettin, was financed by the voluntary gifts of members of Confessing Churches. Twenty-three seminarians attended the first semester of instruction by Dr. Bonhoeffer, including his future great friend and biographer, Eberhard Bethge. Soon the state would declare these seminaries to be illegal, nonetheless, they continued on a more-or-less underground basis for two and a half years during which time they accomplished some great theological work. Meditation and prayer time also were made part of the seminary rule.

After the first term's work at Finkenwalde, Bonhoeffer sent a proposal to the Council of Brethren of the Old Prussian Union for the purpose of gaining permission for a small group of students to remain at the seminary to help him with the work. These brothers, along with Bonhoeffer, would live a communal life in service to Christ, each other, the district churches, and the next group of students. This community would be called the Evangelical House of Brethren. This experiment in community-living, work, meditation, and prayer lasted for two years, and resulted in the publication of a small volume by Dietrich, *Life Together* (Bethge, 2000: 466). Conflict between Bonhoeffer and the new Reich Bishop Heckel resulted in the revocation of Bonhoeffer's right to teach at the University of Berlin.

In the Spring of 1936, the leadership of the Confessing Church prepared a memorandum to Hitler asking such questions as: "Was the de-Christianization of the people official government policy?" and raising such points as: "The new ideology was imposing an anti-Semitism that necessarily committed people to a hatred of the Jews, which parents had to combat in the education of their children" (Bethge, 2000:532). This action paralleled Bonhoeffer's first principle of responsible church action if the state dissolves basic human rights. The church may ask the state if its actions are legitimate state actions. Hitler made no response. However, the memorandum was copied and published abroad, thus placing the Confessing Church in a more dubious position in relation to the German state. On August 23rd, the memorandum was read from many pulpits by Confessing pastors, whose names were noted by the Gestapo. The document was made public by Ernst Tillich and Werner Koch, Bonhoeffer's students. They, along with Friedrich Weissler, the author of the memorandum, were arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Weissler was immediately separated from the others because of his Jewish ancestry and died within a week — the first martyr of the Confessing

Movement. Bonhoeffer's book *The Cost of Discipleship* was completed shortly before the closure of the seminary by the Gestapo in September, 1937.

In the growing euphoria for the Führer after the Austrian *Anschluss*, Dr. Friedrich Werner, president of the Evangelical High Church Council, prepared a special birthday present for Hitler on April 20, 1938. All pastors in the Evangelical Church were to swear a loyalty oath to Hitler. The taking of this oath was, of course, on pain of employment as a pastor. Dietrich was exempt since he was not officially classified as a pastor. However, great debate and anguish of soul followed in the Confessing Church. Great majorities voted in favor of taking the oath. When this shameful episode ended, Nazi leader Martin Bormann communicated to church leaders that the oath was purely voluntary on the part of the pastors and not required by the state. One can imagine the soul-sickness that many felt upon experiencing this cynical and masterful manipulation by the Nazis. This event, together with the Church's silence after the November 9, 1938 *Kristallnacht* (the night of broken glass, which started the pogrom against the Jews), began to isolate Dietrich from what was left of the Confessing Church.

Because of the immediate threat of war and Bonhoeffer's conscientious objection, he sought and received an invitation to lecture at Union Theological Seminary, where he had done his post-doctoral work. He departed on June 2, 1939. At sea he wrote; "We ought to be found only where He is. We can no longer, in fact, be anywhere else than where He is. Whether it is you working over there or I working in America, we are all only where He is... .Or have I, after all, avoided the place where He is? The place where He is for me?" (Wind, 1998: 137). Dietrich was not attempting to formulate a law as to what Christians may or may not do under persecution. He did not think it un-Christian to try and avoid persecution [the Church Fathers would agree]. He came to realize that he could not do so and that his decision to come to the United States had been a mistake. In a letter to Reinhold Niebuhr he stated that; "the Christians of Germany would have to make a decision between wanting the victory of their nation, and the death of a Christian civilization, or the defeat of their nation and the survival of a Christian civilization. You cannot ... remain out of a country when your fellow Christians face such a momentous issue" (Niebuhr, 1966: 165).

His decision was made to return to Germany, and he arrived in Berlin on July 27th. There, he began a close association with his brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnanyi, a brilliant jurist, and private secretary to Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of Germany's counter-intelligence service, the *Abwehr*. It was as a member of this group that von Dohnanyi became an integral part of conspiracy plots to overthrow Hitler. Bonhoeffer was privy to their discussions. One evening von Dohnanyi asked him to comment on Matthew 26:52: "All who take the sword will perish by the sword." Dietrich replied that this was true for the circle of conspirators as well, but that the times called for men to take up that responsibility (Bethge, 2000).

Bonhoeffer's move from pacifism to conspirator was not as puzzling as it seems at first glance. He was zealous for the truth of the gospel and the freedom to preach the gospel. In light of those overarching goals, Bonhoeffer's actions were responses to the situation at hand

and what he understood to be a response to the will of God. In a more basic way the question is, “What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ?” To this question, Bonhoeffer’s life gives us an unusual picture. Certainly the unique people that he knew gave him the opening into the conspiracy against Hitler. Most Christians in Germany were not in that position.

Emmi Bonhoeffer, the wife of Klaus, Dietrich’s brother, related her question to Dietrich and his response, “How is that with you Christians? You will not kill, but that another one does it; you agree, and you are glad about it — how is that?” Dietrich replied,

One shouldn’t be glad about it, but I understand what you mean. It is out of the question for a Christian to ask someone else to do the dirty work so that he can keep his own hands clean. If one sees that something needs to be done, then one must be prepared to do it whether one is a Christian or not. If one sees the task as necessary according to one’s own conscience. If I see that a madman is driving a car into a group of innocent bystanders, then I can’t as a Christian simply wait for the catastrophe and comfort the wounded and bury the dead. I must try to wrest the steering wheel out of the hands of the madman (Trinity Films, 1983).

Bonhoeffer’s journey from expounder of pacifism to involvement in the *Abwehr* plot to overthrow Hitler illustrates a consistent ethical response. This may seem to be obviously untrue, but Emmi Bonhoeffer analyzed this moment: “That’s the way he came into the conspiracy. It’s not a break in his life that he was first a pacifist and first a pious child, and then a helpful young man and later on suddenly he became a politician. It’s a quite clear line, going through, but the situations changed and the tasks changed” (Trinity Films, 1983).

Eberhard Bethge sees part of the development in Bonhoeffer’s attempt to move from a position of Christian privilege into the concrete situation — a movement from the theoretical to the real. “Bonhoeffer’s life consisted of a constant fight to overcome the dangerously privileged character of the Christian religion: in his decision to take up theology, his move from teaching to pastoral work, and then to ‘becoming a man for his own times’ in the conspiracy against Hitler” (Bethge, 2000: 876). Bonhoeffer sees his life as following a straight course. Writing from prison to Eberhard Bethge in 1944 he states:

I heard someone say yesterday that the last years had been completely wasted as far as he was concerned. I’m very glad that I have never yet had that feeling, even for a moment. Nor have I ever regretted my decision in the summer of 1939, for I’m firmly convinced — however strange it may seem — that my life has followed a straight and unbroken course, at any rate in its outward conduct. It has been an uninterrupted enrichment of experience, for which I can only be thankful (Bonhoeffer, 1997: 272).

Recall that his friend, Jean Lasserre, pressed the claims of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount toward the conclusion of pacifism. However, perhaps pacifism is defined too narrowly or forced into a straightjacket in which every kind of coercive action is disavowed. This would not be the model that Christ presents to us with his expulsion of the money-changers from the Temple. As Sabine Damm states,

Bonhoeffer did not reject every form of force. His oppositional attitude toward the National Socialist system of oppression led him indirectly to participate in plans

for a coup. Of necessity, these plans rejected non-violence as a universal principle and consciously accepted force as a means for their implementation. To this extent, his pacifism was relative rather than absolute (Dramm, 2007:139).

Although pacifism may have been a biblically derived position for Bonhoeffer, it began to be part of his overall opposition to the evil of Nazism and particularly the evil of Adolph Hitler. This opposition successively assumed the forms of pacifism, energetic work in the Confessing Church, Operation Seven (the successful plan to spirit Jews out of Germany into Switzerland), and finally becoming a full-fledged member of a conspiracy to kill Hitler which operated within the *Abwehr*.

By 1934, Dietrich sensed that the struggle in the Confessing Church was but a portent of things to come. His phrase “resistance to the death,” is seen through the lens of the Sermon on the Mount. He writes to Erwin Sutz from London,

And although I am investing all my energies working in the church opposition, it is quite clear to me that this opposition is not more than a provisional stage in transition to an entirely different kind of opposition, and that the men concerned with this first skirmishing are only to a very minor extent the same ones who will be involved in that second battle. And I believe that the whole of Christendom must pray with us that the resistance becomes a ‘resistance to the death’, and that people will be found ready to suffer for this purpose. Simply to endure it — that will be what is needed then — not to fight, to strike at, to stand watch — that may be possible for the preliminary skirmish, but the real battle, what it will perhaps later come to, must be simply an endurance with faith and, then, then perhaps God will again acknowledge God’s Word to the church....You know, I believe — perhaps you are surprised by this — that the whole matter will be resolved through the Sermon on the Mount.... (Kelly & Nelson, 1995: 411).

Eventually, Dietrich’s resistance had to become more opaque to his friends, but he continued to express his love for them. Mark Bocker, makes the following comment concerning Bonhoeffer’s ministry to his Finkenwalde students through a circular letter which is dated August 15, 1941.

Bonhoeffer’s letters to the Finkenwalde members, including those who had become soldiers, are eloquent testimony to his continued sense of pastoral ministry to these young men, even as he himself moved into the resistance.... Bonhoeffer’s letters of this period to his students, as well his letters to the families of those who had lost someone in the war, should be understood from the perspective of his ministry, his deep affection for former students, and his grief for friends and colleagues who had died in the war. He was naturally also aware that his circular letters were read by Nazi censors. His criticism of the regime, including its atrocities, was expressed through his resistance (Bonhoeffer, 2006: 207).

Eberhard Bethge writes of five stages of resistance through which Bonhoeffer, and many others, passed. The first stage was simple passive resistance such as subverting Gestapo orders not to teach or write. Next came an open resistance to the state on doctrinal and confessional grounds. This stage is characterized by outstanding men such as Martin Niemöller. The third stage was to become an informed accessory to an impending coup. The fourth stage

was participation in preparation for a post-coup government or church organization. The final stage was active involvement in the conspiracy against Adolph Hitler (Bethge, 2000: 792).

Bonhoeffer went through all of these stages. It is interesting to speculate if his increasing involvement in the conspiracy was a result of the National Socialist atrocities against the Jews or a defense of the gospel through the Confessing Church. The answer is both, yet his defense of the gospel began to take place outside of Confessing Church circles also. His radicalization increased as his disappointment with the Confessing Church increased. The incessant wrangling over the oath of allegiance to Hitler and the silence after the *Kristallnacht* caused Dietrich to distance himself from the Church.

In his book, *Prayerbook of the Bible: An Introduction to the Psalms*, written at the height of Nazi opposition to any honoring of the Old Testament, Bonhoeffer teaches the meaning of the imprecatory psalms. "Nowhere do those who pray these [imprecatory] psalms want to take revenge into their own hands; they leave vengeance to God alone. Therefore they must abandon all personal thoughts of revenge and must be free from their own thirst for revenge; otherwise vengeance is not seriously left to God" (Bonhoeffer, 2005a: 174-175). Conspiracy in the plot to overthrow Hitler was not a case of revenge, clearly. For Bonhoeffer, it was defense of the flock.

After he became involved in the resistance as a courier for the *Abwehr*, Bonhoeffer could no longer involve his brethren from the Confessing Movement. This was a path he had to tread alone. The ethical question for him became the toleration of the Hitler government, which meant to tacitly participate in mass murder, or to be willing to acquiesce in the assassination of Hitler himself. From here there is no escape into a region of ideas or of theology for theology's sake; at this point the theology of the deed becomes the compelling motivation. There is also no escape into an ethically neutral zone or into a zone in which no sin is involved. "The new turning point demanded an entirely different sacrifice: the sacrifice of his Christian reputation" (Bethge, 2000: 678).

In a letter to Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer wrote of the change of perspective he was experiencing, and the toll the conspiracy was taking on him.

My activities, which have lately been very much in the worldly sector, give me plenty to think about. I am surprised that I live, and can go on living, for days without the Bible ... When I open the Bible again, it is ever so new and cheering ... I know that I only need to open my own books to hear what there is to be said against all this ... But I feel how my resistance to everything 'religious' is growing ... I am not religious by nature. But I always have to be thinking of God and of Christ, and I set great store by genuineness, life, freedom and compassion. Only I find the religious trappings so uncomfortable. Do you understand?" (Wind, 1998: 153).

The conspiracy continued. On January 17, 1943, Dietrich had become engaged to the lovely Maria von Wedemeyer of Finkenwalde but the public announcement of their engagement was not made until after Dietrich's arrest. On March 12, 1943, Hans von Dohnanyi delivered some explosives in a briefcase to one of the officers in the conspiracy. They were to be used to take down an airplane with Hitler aboard. The explosives did not fire. On April 5, 1943, both

Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer were arrested. They were taken to Tegel prison in the northwestern area of Berlin. The Gestapo suspected the activities of the *Abwehr*, and hoped to find out more through Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer. However, no further information was obtained from them.

Count Klaus von Stauffenberg continued the conspiracy against Hitler after the breakup of the Canaris, Oster, von Dohnanyi group. On July 20, 1944, he was able to get a briefcase with explosives placed fairly close to Hitler at a meeting with the generals in East Prussia. Von Stauffenberg had been able to arm only half of the explosives. The bomb went off, destroying the bunker, and several generals were killed while only wounding Hitler who vowed to kill all the members of the conspiracy (Doblmeier, 2003). In October, 1944, the Gestapo found Dohnanyi's complete dossier on the atrocities of the Third Reich at the *Abwehr* archive at Zossen. Thus, the Zossen papers sealed the fate of von Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer.

In his last days, Bonhoeffer was transferred to the Reich Security Prison in Berlin where further interrogation by the Gestapo took place. On February 7, 1945, Bonhoeffer was taken to the concentration camp at Buchenwald, where he met British Captain Payne Best, who gives a good recounting of his last days, describing him as all humility and sweetness. Best reported,

He always seemed to diffuse an atmosphere of happiness, of joy in every smallest event in life, and a deep gratitude for the mere fact that he was alive....He was one of the very few men I have ever met to whom his God was real and ever close to him....Bonhoeffer was different; just quite calm and normal, seemingly perfectly at his ease...his soul really shone in the dark desperation of our prison (Kelly & Nelson, 1995: 43).

The van, in which Bonhoeffer and other "special" prisoners were transported to the extermination camp at Flossenbürg, broke down outside of the town of Regensburg. The prisoners were then taken to the village of Schönberg and kept locked in a school building there. It was in Schönberg that Bonhoeffer held his final worship service with his fellow prisoners. His texts were from Isaiah 53; "By His stripes we are healed," and 1 Peter; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By God's great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Payne Best relates that Bonhoeffer "reached the hearts of all, finding just the right words to express the spirit of our imprisonment, and the thoughts and resolutions which it had brought" (Kelly & Nelson, 1995: 44).

The next day, Monday, April 9, 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged for high treason at the Flossenbürg concentration camp. His last recorded words were "This is the end, for me the beginning of life" (Bethge, Bethge, & Gremmels, 1986:233).

Final Reflection

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a pastor. He was a pastor to a group of young people in the working-class district of Wedding in Berlin. He was pastor to a group of young seminarians at Zingst and Finkenwalde. He was pastor to congregations in Barcelona and London. He was pastor to larger groups within the Confessing Church. He was shepherding the flock in the finest patristic tra-

dition where theology was necessarily pastoral theology. The sheep must be protected by defending the faith at the points where it is being attacked. Bonhoeffer was passionately involved in this through his defense of the Barmen declaration, and his courageous words of encouragement to his fellow pastors to defend the faith against the encroachments of Nazism.

In a document written by Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Justus Perels entitled "Petition to the Armed Forces," it is clear that the state was moving into a fiercer opposition to the Church.

The Gestapo's treatment of pastors at interrogations, etc., is now in general the same as that of criminals....The killing of so-called unworthy lives, which has now become better known in the congregations and has claimed its victims from them, is viewed by Christians of all confessions with the deepest alarm and with revulsion, especially in connection with the general abrogation of the Ten Commandments and any security of law and thus as a sign of the anti-Christian stance of leading authorities in the Reich (Bonhoeffer, 2006: 244-245).

The point here is that the Nazi state was moving into a more apocalyptic, anti-Christ stance. The apocalyptic state is the state of the end time. Even in the midst of persecutions of the church, Bonhoeffer did not believe that the Third Reich was necessarily heralding the immediate coming of Christ. There is an authentic and an inauthentic apocalypticism. "The being of government is connected with a divine task ... A complete apostasy from its task would call its being into question. However, by God's providence this complete apostasy is only possible as an eschatological event. There, under severe martyrdom, it leads to the church-community's complete separation from the government as the embodiment of the anti-Christ" (Bonhoeffer, 2006: 514).

Bonhoeffer's involvement in the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler was a result of reflection, previous actions, and the varying circumstances and choices of life. His involvement occurred at an unusual and horrific time in history. This would not be "normal" ethical action, therefore, we move into a discussion of the "borderline case" or the "boundary situation." In his book *Ethics*, it is discussed as the last resort or the borderline case in which the stakes are very high and normal reasoning has run out of alternatives. This case, says Bonhoeffer, moves into the area of the irrational, and for that reason the borderline case cannot be made into a rule, a norm, or a technique (Bonhoeffer, 2005b: 273).

In his essay "After Ten Years," which was written as a Christmas gift for the conspirators, he states that historically important action oversteps the limits of law,

But it makes all the difference whether such overstepping of the appointed limits is regarded in principle as the superseding of them, and is therefore given out to be a law of a special kind, or whether the overstepping is deliberately regarded as a fault which is perhaps unavoidable, justified only if the law and the limit are re-established and respected as soon as possible (Bonhoeffer, 1997: 10-11).

Indeed, it does make all the difference. Bonhoeffer's interpreters see his action in both of these ways — some as a borderline case, some as a norm. He, of course, pondered this conundrum. "At first I wondered a good deal whether it was really for the cause of Christ that I was causing you all such grief; but I soon put that out of my head as a temptation, as I became cer-

tain that the duty had been laid on me to hold out in this boundary situation with all its problems; I became quite content to do this, and have remained so ever since" (Bonhoeffer, 1997: 129). Eberhard Bethge makes this comment concerning this borderline case.

With this theology of his final months Bonhoeffer — consciously or unconsciously — prevented his career of solidarity (with the members of the political resistance), which began as a 'borderline case,' from remaining such; he thereby prevented an easy dismissal of this solidarity. Suddenly this 'borderline case' is made visible and validly interpreted as an example of being Christian today, both in its task and in its destiny. This theology and this life were a breakthrough, in which the nature of this exceptional path revealed itself as the future normality: 'being for others' as sharing in the suffering of Jesus (Bethge, 2000: 886).

To this Sabine Dramm opposes, "...the borderline situation and its guilt remained for him a unique exception, precisely as his own decision to collaborate in conspiracy, and the guilt it involved, was and remained for him likewise a borderline case, a unique exception" (Dramm, 2007: 181).

The times and circumstances were exceptional. Bonhoeffer's involvement as a highly educated and thoughtful theologian was exceptional, but Bethge uses the term "future normality" with respect to sharing in the sufferings of Jesus. If disciples see Jesus as "the man for others," and in imitation of Him begin to be men and women for others in sharing the sufferings of Jesus, what an outflowing of Christian proclamation and goodwill could result.

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BONHOEFFER AND DELP

THE VIEW FROM BELOW

■
BY STEVEN P. MILLIES

"God is beyond in the midst of our life."¹

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*"A new alert type of person must be born of this trial
of fire and of the penetrating radiance of the Spirit."²*

Alfred Delp, S.J.

Alfred Delp, S.J. was born in 1907, in Mannheim, Germany, to a Catholic mother and a Lutheran father. Baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, Delp attended a Lutheran school and was confirmed as a Lutheran. Not long after that confirmation, a quarrel between the headstrong, thirteen year old Delp and his Lutheran pastor escalated to the point where the pastor slapped Delp in the face, and, at that moment, Delp left the Lutheran Church forever. Nine days later, Delp was confirmed as a Catholic and received his First Communion. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1926, and was ordained a priest in 1937 after the usual Jesuit preparations in philosophy and theology.

Jesuits were the subject of considerable suspicion in Nazi Germany, and Delp did more than his part to help them merit special attention from the Nazis. Delp came to the attention of Count Helmuth James von Moltke in 1942 when the Jesuit Provincial, Fr. Augustin Rösch, asked Delp to represent him in the resistance movement. Moltke had formed a circle of resisters that came to be known as the Kreisau Circle, a group motivated primarily to plan for Germany's future after the end of the war (they anticipated that Germany would lose World War II) and to make contact with the Allied Powers. Moltke was motivated particularly by the social encyclicals of Leo XIII as his model, and Delp provided the group with expertise and background on Catholic social teaching. It is important to note that the Kreisau Circle in general, and, moreover, Moltke and Delp in particular, did not embark on resistance to mount a coup. Other members of the Kreisau Circle eventually gravitated toward more direct action, and after these members attempted a nearly successful plot against Hitler's life in on July 20, 1944, the Gestapo took a greater interest the members of the Circle and in anyone else that they could connect with resistance.

Delp was swept up in a wave of arrests on July 28, 1944, and spent the period from July, 1944 until January, 1945 in Berlin's Tegel Prison, where, as he awaited trial, he wrote a collection of meditations and letters. On January 11, 1945, Delp was sentenced to die for his resistance against the Nazis. He was hanged on February 2, 1945 in the Plötzensee Prison outside Berlin. Berlin was liberated by the Soviet Army on May 2, 1945 — just three months to the day after the execution of Delp.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a more familiar character to people knowledgeable of this period. Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau in 1906 to Paula von Hase and her husband, Karl Friedrich Bonhoeffer, a noted Berlin psychiatrist. Bonhoeffer's family was not particularly religious, and Bonhoeffer's announcement that he would study theology and join the ranks of the clergy came as quite a shock to them. Qualifying for his licentiate in theology with his dissertation *Sanctorum Communio* in 1927, he went on to begin his career as pastor and teacher.

In 1937 Bonhoeffer published his best-known work, *The Cost of Discipleship*, a book that brought him notice in Germany and around the world. Indeed, Bonhoeffer's many contacts in the Church of England and the Episcopalian Church in the United States created an unusual situation when they came to the attention of the Nazi government in 1940. Despite Bonhoeffer's vocal criticism of the regime since 1933, Bonhoeffer was attached to the staff of the Munich Military Intelligence Office (*Abwehr*). The contacts in Britain and the United States that Bonhoeffer had developed through his theological criticism of Nazism had made him valuable to the Nazi government, which (somewhat imprudently) put him to work in intelligence. At the same time, working in the *Abwehr* involved Bonhoeffer even more deeply in the resistance because the July 20 Plot against Hitler, as other plots before it, would be a project of officials engaged in resistance activities within the *Abwehr*.

The Gestapo detected the presence of several "irregularities" in the Munich Intelligence Office in early 1943, and took an interest in Bonhoeffer and his compatriots. On April 5, 1943 Bonhoeffer and several co-conspirators were arrested. Bonhoeffer was held and interrogated in several Nazi jails over the next two years. He was transferred for a time to the concentration camp at Buchenwald, and then hanged at Flossenbürg on April 9, 1945, twenty-nine days before the end of the war in Europe.

Nothing in the historical record tells us that Delp and Bonhoeffer ever met in person, despite their having encountered many of the same people in the course of their resistance, despite their both having been imprisoned in different parts of the prison at Tegel from late 1944 until early 1945, and despite the other remarkable similarities in their stories of resistance. Surely they must have known of one another. Yet, the separateness of their journeys is important to emphasize not only for how strange it was that they never met, but also to underscore that their responses to their experiences shared remarkable similarities, despite not having had any apparent opportunity to compare notes.

Both men experienced suffering and from that experience appropriated suffering as, *the view from below*, a perspective that had been the distinguishing accent of early Christianity in political life but had been lost and transformed through so many centuries of dominance since Constantine. Rather than codifying a scheme for Christian politics, seeking some framework in which the divine or eternal or natural law might be mediated into a human law or kingdom, Bonhoeffer and Delp experienced the cataclysm of World War II and delved deeply into the reality of that experience to recover something of Christianity's own original understanding of human participation in reality. Our most Christian and human calling is not to be

in power, not to be in control, but to identify with suffering and from that ground to come to know God and to know justice. This paper offers an exploration of the experiences of Delp and Bonhoeffer while under Nazi arrest, as they embraced *the view from below* and in this exploration reveals the common characteristics of their experiences. Moreover, their *view from below* has a great deal to say about the churches and the Christian engagement with political life in their time and in ours.

Alfred Delp, S.J. — imprisoned 28 July 1944; executed 2 February 1945

Already awaiting his execution, Alfred Delp wrote to his friend Luise Oestreicher in one of his last letters, “Don’t let my mother tell any ‘pious legends’ about me. I was a brat.”³ At first, this expression appears unremarkable. Delp sat in his cell awaiting execution, and he could not have failed to have been aware of his mortality. A joke about how he would be remembered should not surprise us. Yet, in other ways, it is a remarkable expression. We read it and we recall the description of the thirteen year old Delp in his quarrel with the Lutheran pastor. Perhaps we even wonder whether the slap to the face Delp received from that minister might, in some way, have been earned by the young Delp. However the passage comes across, it cannot fail to resonate with the most persistent theme of Delp’s prison writings: imprisonment had changed him, and Delp knew it. Perhaps he was so aware of that change, as his letters suggest he may have been, that he knew his story and writings might inspire “pious legends.” Ironically, even as he chided his mother’s recollection with humility, Delp attested to the distance he had traveled from being that young “brat.”

Delp’s English-language biographer tells us that during his time in prison, “Delp became more aware than ever of his fragile psyche ... [and] ... how much his pre-prison God-talk had been so much rhetoric, that his spiritual nakedness in the presence of God within the confines of his cell was of a new and terrifying order.”⁴ Perusing Delp’s letters to friends during his imprisonment cannot fail to reveal this in the starkest ways. Various, Delp described how his arrest had affected him as “a ton-weight on the heart,” writing that he was “in a terrible state of affairs,” and felt as though he was “in the most extreme position possible.” And we certainly have reasons to understand why a thread of despair runs through some of those letters.⁵ Delp’s imprisonment was not only the quiet solitude of his cell. We have little personal account of Delp’s own treatment in prison. Other prisoners in his circumstances reported the following account:

Prisoners were met with the usual ‘passive’ torture: bright lights shining in their eyes at all hours, a meager diet of bread and water, and sleep deprivation ... Then there was verbal torture ... [in which] the prisoner often stood for hours, having had little sleep or nourishment. In Delp’s case, the interrogators also attempted, by means that are not known, to persuade him to leave the Society of Jesus and join the Nazis.⁶

And other prisoners reported that beatings took place with “heavy clubs, spiked leather straps, and whips of hippopotamus hide, all applied with such brute force that the handcuffed

prisoner fell forward, face and head crashing upon the floor.”⁷ Marianne Hapig and Marianne Pünder, friends of Delp who secretly delivered supplies to him and who laundered his clothes during his imprisonment, reported that his shirt was stained with blood. And, we have this most sobering account from Delp, himself — his only, albeit oblique, reference to his treatment:

During one night, around August 15, I was nearly in despair. I was brought back to the prison late in the evening, badly beaten. The SS men who brought me back left me with the words, “You’re not going to be able to sleep tonight. You’ll pray, but there’ll be no God and no angel to deliver you. But we’ll sleep and tomorrow morning we’ll have our strength back to give you another thrashing.” I was so relieved when the [air raid] alarm sounded, and I expected the bomb to either kill me or allow me to escape.⁸

Few people could endure what Delp endured and fail to be changed by the experience. Even fewer could endure such treatment to grow and develop spiritually. This is only one part of what makes Delp’s document of Christian witness so extraordinary.

Six weeks before his execution, Delp wrote, “I remain grateful, as I stand here now at the edge, where I’ve left behind so much of what seemed indispensable and necessary ... I was always a strange kid. In fact, I remained a kid and have finally started to become a man before God and for God.”⁹ Later, Delp wrote with regret at how he used words like “hope” and “trust,” adding that, “I know now that I used them uncomprehending, like a child. And, in doing so I deprived my life of much fruitfulness and achievement.”¹⁰ We cannot fail to be reminded of Delp’s caution against “pious legends” as we see these references to childhood and to his development into maturity recurring throughout his letters. Delp must have recognized in his prison experience something like a growth to a fuller spiritual stature. Near the end, he described his imprisonment as “a training in inner freedom” and, in one of his final letters, he made the extraordinary spiritual observation that “whoever isn’t able to accept death hasn’t lived right. Death isn’t an assault, a foreign power, but rather the last part of this life. The two are connected.”¹¹ This detachment only can have come from a profound reflection on his circumstances and on the Gospel as his faith and life had brought it into focus. Delp himself described the fullness of his faith journey: “When I compare my icy calm during the court proceedings with the fear I felt, for instance, during the bombing of Munich, I realize how much I have changed.”¹²

During his stay in prison, Delp’s diary and letters record that he had ample opportunity for reading and writing. That he had occasion for writing is clear from the substantial number of pages available to us from this period, but Delp also records that his friends were able to convey books to him. In a particularly notable passage, Delp wrote of his reading Meister Eckhart. Eckhart was an interesting choice of reading material, all the more so because the book was Delp’s own. Eckhart was the controversial Dominican mystic of the 14th century whose writings were condemned by a papal bull in 1329 for theological irregularities. Even today, his writings have not yet been fully rehabilitated by the Church. Eckhart’s mystical

Neo-Platonism which places a greater emphasis on the apophatic way than on the power of reason did not follow easily in the footsteps of Thomism. Delp offered the observation:

[T]he task of theology for Eckhart was not so much to reveal a set of truths about God as it was to frame the appropriate paradoxes that would serve to highlight the inherent limitations of our minds and to mark off in some way the boundaries of the unknown territory where God dwells.¹³

For as much as that interpretive passage tells us about the controversies that have surrounded Eckhart for centuries, it also offers an interesting window into Delp's mind as he reflected on "the whole Eckhart question," concluding that "Eckhart failed as, in his own way, every person must fail when it is a matter of analyzing and passing on an intimate personal experience."¹⁴ It is in this context that we might most fruitfully approach Delp's prison writings which, indeed, attempt to convey an "intimate personal experience," an understanding of human life, social and political questions, the role of the Church in the world, and Christian faith. Like Eckhart, Delp faced a considerable challenge in his effort to convey how his prison experience had revealed the world to him. Ultimately, Delp's view from the gallows of Plötzensee may be obscured less by the inadequacy of how humans convey such experiences than by our very human, stubborn refusal to remember and learn from the lessons we see in the life of someone like Delp.

Delp's trenchant political and ecclesial critiques have not found a wide audience at least because several commentators have found the critique's prideful *Germanism* a bit too narrow and chauvinistic to be useful.¹⁵ In an extended analysis of the world political situation, just to give one example, Delp concluded that "there can be no Europe without Germany," after a pointed critique of each major European power and their various flaws that leave them dependent on German leadership. Such German leadership, of course, must flow from "the original currents — Christianity, Germanism (not Teutonism) and classicism."¹⁶ Nazism certainly was not Delp's model for a Germany that would lead Europe. Martin Menke suggests that,

For Delp, the model of the successful relationship of religious imperatives and the state was that of the long-gone Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, a vision of an empire in which people were one in faith, in which the political hierarchy reflected, at least in theory, the moral hierarchy of human purposes.¹⁷

Such a political model suggests a fascinating subject for study and reflection when we pair it with Delp's expertise and fondness for the social doctrines of Leo XIII. However, what is more relevant for our purpose here is to consider how such a set of political goals invited Delp to make some rather blunt criticisms of the Church and her role in the world from his cell in Berlin.

Indeed, once we set aside Delp's ethnic chauvinism, what remains are nevertheless some stark and startling observations. To name only the most remarkable passage, one Thomas Merton singled out in 1962, we read:

A Church that makes demands in the name of a peremptory God no longer carries weight in a world of changing values. The new generation is separated from the

clear conclusions of our traditional theology by a great mountain of boredom and disillusion thrown up by past experience. We have destroyed people's confidence in us by the way we live. We cannot expect two thousand years of history to be an unmixed blessing and recommendation — history can be a handicap too. But recently the person turning to the Church for enlightenment has all too often found only a tired man to receive him — a man who then had the dishonesty to hide his fatigue under pious words and fervent gestures. At some future date the honest historian will have some bitter things to say about the contribution made by the churches to the creation of the mass-mind, of collectivism, dictatorships, and so on.¹⁸

This passage is filled with important things that we must consider carefully. Yet, perhaps the first thing we should notice is that Delp wrote it in 1945; Thomas Merton wrote in 1962 that “the same chaotic, inexhaustible struggle of armed nations has continued in a different form,” and that still in 1962, “Christians themselves are confused and passive, looking this way and that for indications of what to do or think next.”¹⁹ Indeed, Merton observed that in 1962 fear of Communism had replaced fear of Nazism, but more fundamental problems remained: “as Fr. Delp shows, the domination of fear completely distorts the true perspectives of Christianity and it may well happen that those whose religious activity reduces itself in the long run to a mere negation, will find that their faith has lost all content.”²⁰ We might argue not unreasonably that in our own time fear of secularism or terrorism has replaced the fear of Nazism or Communism. We might debate exactly what fear dominates and preoccupies us. It seems doubtful that many people would dispute that Delp's most essential point remains as true today, as it was in 1962, as it was in 1945.

To name that most essential point is perhaps the easiest way to begin our analysis. “The honest historian,” Delp cautions us, “will have some bitter things to say” about the culpability of the Christian churches in relation to contemporaneous dictatorships. This is an alarming claim, no matter how it is presented. What can Father Delp have meant? Merton observes in his introduction to the *Prison Writings* that many others have joined Delp since 1945 to agree that “the Church is seriously out of contact with modern man, and can in some senses be said to have failed in her duty to him.”²¹ The conditions of “modern man” are important to our understanding. Merton finds also that John XXIII shared this concern for the alienation of the Church from modern man when he convened the Second Vatican Council. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) eventually would embrace the idea that “the human race is involved in a new stage of history” unleashed by “the intelligence and creative energies of man” (§4). This changed circumstance might bring about “a more vivid sense of God” once a superstitious or magical view of the world gives way to “a more critical ability to ... [exact] ... day by day a more personal and explicit adherence to faith” (§7). The increase of education, conscious participation in liturgy, scientific understanding, and all of the other goods of the modern world actually can deepen Christian faith. Yet, and perhaps not surprisingly, the documents of the Second Vatican Council do not acknowledge any failure to reach men and women of the modern world that might have brought

about an ecumenical council.

If we look to Delp's own text, of course, he provides a valuable clue that can tell us what shape those failures took. He rejects the "peremptory God" in the modern world, a "world of changing values." This God who allows no questions, brooks no debate, is concealed behind "a great mountain of boredom and disillusion thrown up by past experience." Contextually, Delp appears to reject the doctrinaire approach that he is very careful to attribute to "the churches," and not only to the Roman Catholic Church. He wrote that "order and direction are not to be confused with formalism and feudalism," and his target appears to be the passivity cultivated among believers by a "privileged clergy" more interested in its esoteric "private tastes" than in ministering to the changing needs of modern people.²² Here Delp seems to foreshadow what the fathers of the Second Vatican Council would write in *Gaudium et spes* when he wrote that "Modern humanity has become an expert in many departments of life. ... And the precision which the scientific age imposes on many people makes them highly critical of the superficial way in which we clergy often perform our duty in the wider sense of the word."²³ The way in which modern women and men engage all of the many fields of human activity bears little resemblance to the way in which a hierarchical church (of any denomination) presents the propositions of faith as long-settled formulas with no variation or room for discussion. There was no debating the need for hierarchy and form for Alfred Delp. Yet, Delp insisted that "We must abandon our arrogant pretensions to reverence as a right. The Church must come to look upon herself far more as a sacrament, as a way and a means, not as a goal and an end in itself."²⁴

Of course, as Christianity has divided into a multiplicity of denominations and sects, the tendency of each church to think of itself as "an end in itself" can only have become more pronounced.²⁵ It is in our nature to define ourselves against some other, and nowhere more than where the differences can appear to be so slight. It is as much for this reason that Delp also laments "the spectacle of a Christendom at logger-heads with itself," and highlights that "history can be a handicap, too."²⁶ It flatters Christians to believe that they should be exemplary models of unity and community, but history has demonstrated that such rarely has been the case. Wearied of these divisions and the ceaseless effort required to repeat the same replies to the same questions, it would seem that the churches indeed have become "a tired man," going through the motions of holding on to their flocks perhaps less in order to win salvation for them than to make certain that they are not lost to a rival group of Christians. This is a picture of a Christianity that has lost its sense of purpose: churches no longer able to articulate their purpose to speak to men and women, and a humanity shaped and formed by centuries of Christianity that has become, in Delp's word, "Godless."

Delp, himself, describes this as a theme in his writing, that modern men and women are Godless, but in a particular sense. Modern men and women "are no longer *capable* of knowing God," Delp tells us, because of a "shifting of the human center of gravity" brought about by an attitude among the churches that ignored "practical problems of everyday life" so that "worldly

wisdom" could attain predominance at just the moment when "humans have built up in their own mind a picture of themselves as a sensitive animal with mind, reason, temperament."²⁷ The changing of how we live, the transition from feudal social organization to modern social organization, is not itself sufficient to bring this situation about and, indeed, Delp's own emphasis on the necessity that the churches should attend to "practical problems" (such as calling for an "existence minimum" ... that will see men and women enjoy ... "sufficient living space, stable law and order, and adequate nourishment," ... "guarantee every human being space to grow in") reminds us of the debts we know he had to the social teachings of Leo XIII.²⁸ Alfred Delp believed in a Christianity that could reach modern men and women of our time. Modern circumstances were an obstacle to overcome. The deepest problem resided in the churches, themselves.

Delp's chauvinism can, in fact, be helpful to us. Delp's expression of a Germanism mixed with Christianity and classicism reminds us of his nationalism as much as the centrality of Catholic Christianity for him. We might keep that in mind as we recall also Delp's pre-prison interest in the Holy Roman Empire as a political model that could be at home with the social teachings of the modern Church. Before his arrest, Delp had hoped for a Church that could make peace with the modern world. His perception of how possible that could be seemed to have been darkened by his arrest. Yet his skepticism seems not to have originated with the prospect of the Church's never reaching modern men and women. Even while in prison, he harbored hope that humanity could enjoy a re-awakening that would build on the achievements of modernity. The difficulty was not so much modernity, or the tyrannical regime in which he found himself. The problem was the Church. Delp evoked the parable of the Good Samaritan to say that as "long as a person lies bleeding, beaten and robbed by the wayside, the person who tends and help him will be the one who wins his heart."²⁹ The "tired man" who mouths pieties and platitudes but does not immerse himself in the problems and challenges that men and women experience will win no one. Worse, he will leave men and women vulnerable to the beguiling allure of the dictator who promises an earthly paradise. I think we are right to hear this very frank accusation in Delp's assertion that "the honest historian will have some bitter things to say about the contribution made by the churches" ... to ... "collectivism, dictatorships, and so on." Delp's prison writings sound a frantic alarm at what the churches were losing as they clung to their certainty.

At the same time, the fact of Delp's writing these things down while he was in prison speaks to us a note of hopefulness. In his meditations on Advent 1944, Delp wondered:

What use are all the lessons learned through our suffering and misery if no bridge can be thrown from our side to the other shore? What is the point of our revulsion from error and fear if it brings no enlightenment, does not penetrate the darkness and dispel it? What use is it shuddering at the world's coldness, which all the time grows more intense, if we cannot discover the grace to conjure up visions of better conditions?³⁰

We might even draw a conclusion from the inspiration Delp drew from the parable of the

Good Samaritan. While it had made his criticisms more trenchant and sharp, prison had not dashed Delp's hopes for a future in which humanity might be "induced to take itself seriously as being created with a divine purpose to a divine pattern."³¹ His own experience of suffering, lying "bleeding, beaten and robbed by the wayside," had awakened a bright light of insight into the most essential problems of Christianity and modernity in Alfred Delp. As we know, to convey such an experience is no easy task and, even if it is described successfully, the communication depends no less on the speaker than on the willing listener. What we choose to hear, as much as what we choose to remember, determines much of what experience can convey to us. But in making his attempt to convey his view from his cell, Delp makes no apologies for "condemning present day religious endeavors as sterile," yet his criticism is not merely an attack.³² There is also a prescription for how to improve and re-vivify religious endeavors: "take as their starting point the position of humankind as human beings ... Our concern must be with a person's reverence, devotion, love; only when he is using these capacities is he a human being at all. We must direct our efforts toward reawakening love."³³

This is a very striking passage, perhaps because it returns to the truest touchstone of Christianity one that places *caritas et amor* above all other values. It is perhaps overpowering to imagine its having been written in a dank prison cell by a person under pain of execution and by a person with shackled hands. Yet, the legacy of Father Delp is to have shown a path to a Christianity even somewhat more radical than the most progressive interpretations of the Second Vatican Council. Delp's prison writings are a testimony to the clarity that becomes possible through an experience of suffering. But even more, it documents the value of experience, in itself, as that which discloses transcendent insights far more eloquently than any proposition or formulation crafted in the minds of theologians and philosophers who have not had the experience of suffering. In the same way that Eckhart's contemporaries regarded his insights skeptically, Delp has proved to be as prescient as he yet remains fundamentally unappreciated for the depth of his insight that our religious endeavors must not be sterile, our intellectualism and tradition, alone, will not win souls. Especially among modern men and women, formalism and feudalism are the enemies of a faith that would do good. And, as Delp experienced himself, a faith that can do no good will leave the field open for others who have no intention to do any good.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer — imprisoned 5 April 1943; executed 9 April 1945

Dietrich Bonhoeffer has become a very popular subject among those who have an interest in Christianity and political theory because he dealt directly and personally with one of the most extreme moral challenges that can be imagined. Bonhoeffer grappled concretely with the morality of tyrannicide. Delp, as well, may have come to the opinion that the killing of Hitler could be morally justified. We cannot be certain.³⁴ However, Bonhoeffer certainly had made his peace with the idea and was implicated in no fewer than three plots to assassinate Hitler. A comparison between Bonhoeffer and Delp on this moral issue would be fascinating, but our purpose here is to draw these two figures into a different sort of conversation. Our interest is

not in tyrannicide or the moral position of the citizen, as such. Instead, we want to understand how the experiences and suffering of these two men can speak to us more broadly about the relationship between Christian belief and political life. Bonhoeffer gives us the gift of a description from the perspective of the marginalized — the outcast, the powerless, the oppressed, the persecuted, the suffering — *the view from below*, and in that description what is revealed to him and to us, if we pay attention.³⁵

The editor of Bonhoeffer's prison writings informs us that the critical passage that he entitled *The View from below*, "was probably written at the end of 1942 (or in autumn 1943), and is unfinished."³⁶ Bonhoeffer may not even have intended this passage to be a part of his reflection on ten years of Nazism and its moral costs. Yet, it is a poignant and important piece of writing. It reads,

There remains an experience of incomparable value. We have for once learnt to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled — in short, from the perspective of those who suffer. The important thing is that neither bitterness nor envy should have gnawed at the heart during this time, that we should have come to look with new eyes at matters great and small, sorrow and joy, strength and weakness, that our perception of generosity, humanity, justice and mercy should have become clearer, freer, less corruptible. We have to learn that personal suffering is a more effective key, a more rewarding principle for exploring the world in thought and action than personal good fortune. This perspective from below must not become the partisan possession of those who are eternally dissatisfied; rather, we must do justice to life in all its dimensions from a higher satisfaction, whose foundation is beyond any talk of 'from below' or 'from above.' This is the way in which we may affirm it.³⁷

Here we can begin to understand that Bonhoeffer and Delp both appear to have appreciated their situations in a distinctly Christian understanding of suffering that goes at least as far back as the prophet Isaiah. Suffering, at least, is redemptive. More, it may give privileged insights to the one who bears suffering ("he shall see the light in fullness of days ... through his suffering, my servant shall justify many").³⁸ The image of the suffering servant is familiar not only in Scripture but also throughout the history of Christian martyrdom, and Bonhoeffer and Delp could not have failed to be aware of that.

At the same time, a striking passage in a letter to his student, Eberhard Bethge, finds Bonhoeffer's remarking that, "These things mustn't be dramatized. I doubt very much that I'm 'suffering' any more than you, or most people, are suffering today."³⁹ Though Bonhoeffer was imprisoned for longer than Delp, his social class and network of connections appear to have won him somewhat better treatment while he awaited execution.⁴⁰ Still, Bonhoeffer endured a long separation from his fiancée, he knew of the pain his situation caused his parents, and he must have known what sentence awaited him inevitably, given the nature of his arrest and the charges he faced. The thread of despair so discernible in Delp's prison letters is more difficult to detect in Bonhoeffer's gentlemanly correspondence, but it is present in his writings. In a prison poem, *Sorrow and Joy* Bonhoeffer wrote:

What, then, is joy? What, then, is sorrow?
Time alone can decide between them,
When the immediate poignant happening
lengthens out to continuous wearisome suffering,
when the laboured creeping moments of daylight,
slowly uncover the fullness of our disaster,
sorrow's unmistakable features.⁴¹

When one actually is imprisoned and facing execution, that inspiring biblical literature of suffering might only be words on a page if there is not a spiritual depth already present to bring forth those insights amid the despair that is companion to the experience. To read Bonhoeffer's prison writings is to see the full force of that spiritual depth as he reflects upon what had befallen him.

Perhaps the most interesting note of despair we find in Bonhoeffer's prison writings concerns his grappling with tyrannicide. It is not the moral question itself, really, which grabs our attention so much as what seems like Bonhoeffer's own perplexity at how unguided and alone he was in his struggle with the question. Centuries of Christian reflection on the moral law had not given him much assistance and, a bit like Delp, he found that the churches were not engaged with the very practical problem of good and evil that confronted him. A 1944 letter to Eberhard Bethge finds Bonhoeffer's reflecting on his early work, *The Cost of Discipleship*, in which he wrote,

The followers of Jesus have been called to peace. ... And to that end they renounce all violence and tumult. In the cause of Christ nothing is to be gained by such methods. ... They renounce all self-assertion, and quietly suffer in the face of hatred and wrong. In so doing they overcome evil with good, and establish the peace of God in the midst of a world of war and hate.⁴²

Intriguingly, Bonhoeffer wrote in that letter to Bethge, looking back twelve years after *The Cost of Discipleship*, that, "Today I can see the dangers of that book, though I still stand by what I wrote."⁴³ That danger referred to "the depth of the contrast" between becoming "a saint," and learning "to have faith." He goes on to say that, "I thought I could acquire faith by trying to live a holy life, [but] I discovered later, and I'm still discovering right up to this moment, that is it [*sic*] only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith."⁴⁴ Already in prison letters, Bonhoeffer had referred to the type he somewhat dismissively referred to as *homines religiosi*, but here we get something very near to a definition: those who separate faith from life, who "attempt to make something of oneself" and get by on appearances or, as Delp put it, "skim[ming] the surface."

Bonhoeffer wrote out the outline for a book around this time. He describes the project as, "a book of not more than 100 pages, divided into three chapters: (1) A Stocktaking of Christianity; (2) The Real Meaning of Christian Faith; (3) Conclusions." In a way that cannot fail to remind us of Delp's appraisals of modern men and women, Bonhoeffer writes bluntly about "The coming of age of mankind," in which "spiritual force is lacking," and which occasions Bonhoeffer to ask, "What protects us against the menace of organization?"⁴⁵ Once more,

we hear of the enlightened men and women of this century who have been left unprotected before those who desire only power by churches that cannot connect faith to saintliness. Men and women are “religionless,” according to Bonhoeffer, as opposed to Delp’s description of being “Godless,” and God is reduced to being “a working hypothesis” or merely “superfluous.” Yet, perhaps most intriguing was his evocation of what he called a “religionless Christianity” in his prison writings.

Religionless Christianity has been the grist for much writing about Bonhoeffer’s life and thought, and with good reason. The phrase itself is provocative. In Bonhoeffer’s own usage, the concept appears to have a specific, definite meaning that explains how he does not make a departure from the Christian faith, but rather a new understanding of how the Christian faith might be relevant for “a world come of age.” Perhaps first, it should suggest to us how Christianity might become relevant to men and women of the twentieth century who have become “religionless.” Bonhoeffer is a bit brief about the characteristics of this world “come of age.” Our best hints come from a set of notes toward a book he never had a chance to write. There he says, “people as they are now simply cannot be religious any more,” and, moreover, he suggests a deep distinction between Christian faith as “participation in this being of Jesus Christ” and religion as an “*a priori* of mankind” that encompasses “temporally conditioned presuppositions of metaphysics, inwardness, and so on.” We might think of it profitably with Delp’s descriptions of the lives of modern men and women close at hand, as well. But what seems clear is that Bonhoeffer is attempting to come to grips with the impotence of dogma before a world of autonomous individuals, and at the same time expose the greater power of the *experience* of faith in a world set between dogma and the despair of a world that no longer takes Christianity seriously.

Bonhoeffer suggested approaching moral and social doctrine in a way that accounts for the reality of autonomy and the difficulty of finding “ground under our feet.”⁴⁶ The world no longer simply will accept a religious answer to the great questions, but the answer of experience may offer a new place to begin. Bonhoeffer sought “authentic transcendence” that is not the idealist “‘religious’ relationship to the highest, most powerful, and best Being imaginable,” but “‘existence for others’, through participation in the being of Jesus ... [through] ... the neighbour who is within reach in any given situation.”⁴⁷ Such a doctrine might at first seem radical when we view it through the lens of the Christian tradition, but it accurately reflects how that tradition seemed when seen through Bonhoeffer’s experience of the Nazi regime. Neither the rigors of religious dogma nor the despair of a world without God offered avenues of effective resistance to Nazism. Bonhoeffer’s ground of action for neighbor, of “hope and prepar[ation] for a better earthly future,” offered the only place to “stand fast.”⁴⁸ Further, if we are correct to take Bonhoeffer’s “religionless Christianity” as originating in the freedom of individuals who have “come of age” and “outgrown” religiosity, if the emergence of “religionless Christianity” is a mature expression of human freedom as it had been nurtured by Christianity across centuries (and, there are many good reasons to believe Bonhoeffer saw it

that way), then we may see the accession of “religionless Christianity” as an organic development along a discernible religious and social evolution that sits comfortably with Christian faith.⁴⁹

When Bonhoeffer sought to describe the terms of the “ground under our feet,” he spoke again from personal experience, describing the process of “[t]hinking and acting for the sake of the coming generation, but being ready to [die] any day without fear or anxiety.”⁵⁰ Bonhoeffer wrote cryptically that, “In other times it may have been the business of Christianity to champion the equality of all men; its business today will be to defend passionately human dignity and reserve.”⁵¹ We cannot fail, again, to hear the echo of Delp’s own formulation for the future of Christianity in Bonhoeffer’s words, “Our concern must be with a person’s reverence, devotion, love; only when he is using these capacities is he a human being at all.” Both express concern for the social and practical realities of daily living. Indeed, this description of the “business of Christianity” sounds not very different from the sense of the church as “a sacrament, as a way and a means, not as a goal and an end in itself,” as Delp described it. A church might imply many things, but in the way Bonhoeffer and Delp spoke of church from their prison cells there can be no doubt that we hear the churches described as serving the needs of men and women in a condition of vulnerability in their insecurity and suffering. Speaking here in recognizably Christian terms of the selfless love for others, Bonhoeffer sketches out a principle for action that demands a willingness to emerge from our bounded selves. Attempting further to describe his principle Bonhoeffer used words such as “sympathy and action,” but the cumulative effect is to convince the reader of the difficulty that any attempt to formulate a specific set of propositions or doctrines would encounter. Of course, there should be no surprise that we encounter difficulty here. As with Eckhart and Delp, Bonhoeffer was attempting to articulate what he had learned through an intimate personal experience — a point at which, inevitably, words must fail.

Here we should pause to observe that Bonhoeffer’s writings before his imprisonment already pointed in these directions. What is more, to look at the background can clarify Bonhoeffer’s reference to a “business of Christianity” that is concerned with equality or dignity, but makes no mention of salvation. So much of Bonhoeffer’s incomplete theology has been misunderstood, that we must take a moment to see the depth of his orthodox Christian belief at work if we are to appreciate the power of his insights. Additionally, to read Bonhoeffer’s pre-prison writings is to see a trajectory that aims at and prepares him for what his later experiences would call forth from him, namely, a re-evaluation of how Christianity speaks to men and women of the twentieth century, and our time.

Bonhoeffer had spoken provocatively in 1930 of Christ as existing “among us as community, as Church in the hiddenness of history.” He added that, “It is the mystery of the community that Christ is in her and, only through her, reaches to men.”⁵² In a series of lectures he gave at the University of Berlin in 1933, he developed this idea to say that, “Every attempt to give a philosophical basis for the fact that Christ is the centre of history must be rejected,” ... for ...

“[t]he question about absolute claims is a liberal and rationalistic question and only serves to distort the question which is appropriate.”⁵³ Bonhoeffer rejected the desire to quantify Christ definitively, an impulse he attributed to “liberal” tendencies (liberal theology) as much as he identified them also with what is “rationalistic,” by which we must take him to mean both the rationalism of Modernity and the Enlightenment as much as the earlier rational tradition of Christianity that owes its roots to the Greeks.

More than a decade before his arrest, we find Bonhoeffer chafing at traditional and contemporaneous Christian approaches to understanding Christ and the world. Yet, Bonhoeffer gives an account of a Christology that takes the person of Christ and the role of the church in salvation seriously — “Christ is the centre of history.” But he observes that our unknowing can tell us things not available to the rational mind. He suggests that, “the concept of the incarnation must be so defined negatively as to unmask every attempt to interpret either the fully human nature or the fully divine nature of Jesus, at the price of diminishing the one or the other.”⁵⁴ Just as Christ appears to us “as community” and so we find Christ as He really is in one another, this apophatic undertaking (the *via negativa*) must not be appreciated as an attempt to step away from soteriology — the reality of Christ as God become human to bring salvation. Rather, this emphasis on the need to seek Christ in His “hiddenness” which is everywhere in our daily experience affirms Bonhoeffer’s orthodoxy: Christ is immersed in us, as we are in Him. The effect is not to affirm the death of God or to eschew the practice of religion. Instead, Bonhoeffer refocuses the questions of Christianity to find the answers where they had been in first century Palestine where we would have found Jesus most at home, among His people. So far as Bonhoeffer himself experienced the *view from below*, he only grew more aware of these realities.

Bonhoeffer had undertaken a book, *Ethics*, in the months leading up to his arrest in 1943 and, while he never had an opportunity to complete the work, his friends organized his drafts and notes into a sensible format that engages these questions, again, from his pre-prison perspective. Nevertheless, as with the Berlin lectures, when we combine the *Ethics* with his prison writings, we can see the trajectory of Bonhoeffer’s ideas that draws some instructive conclusions — not the least of which is that found in the topic of Government and Church — and, as well, several other matters that address the applicability of Christian belief in human life. Bonhoeffer wrote that “Government is instituted for the sake of Christ,” and we can sense immediately the deep influences of Augustine and Luther in this treatment.⁵⁵ Yet, Bonhoeffer’s treatment of the church-state relationship also has a more enigmatic feature. He asserts that the church’s aim “is not that government should pursue a Christian policy, enact Christian laws, etc., but that it should be a true government in accordance with its own special task.”⁵⁶ He goes further to add that, “the office of government remains independent” from the spiritual function.⁵⁷

But, earlier, Bonhoeffer wrote about the “Total and Exclusive Claim of Christ” on the world, he adverts to what appears to be an “irreconcilable contradiction” between Jesus’ sayings at

Mk. 9:40 (“He that is not against us is for us”) and Mt. 12:30 (“He that is not with me is against me”). For Bonhoeffer, the contradiction vanishes when we apply “living experience” to explain them:

[U]nder the pressure of anti-Christian forces there came together groups of men who confessed the faith unequivocally and who were impelled to seek a clear decision for or against Christ in strict discipline of doctrine and of life ... The exclusive demand for a clear profession of allegiance to Christ caused the band of confessing Christians to become ever smaller; the saying ‘he that is not with me is against me’ became an actual concrete experience of the Christian Church; and then, precisely through this concentration on the essential, the Church acquired the inward freedom and breadth which preserved her against any timid impulse to draw narrow limits, and there gathered around her men who came from very far away, and men to whom she could not refuse her fellowship and her protection; injured justice, oppressed truth, vilified humanity and violated freedom all sought for her, or rather for her Master ... So now she had the living experience of that other saying of Jesus: “He that is not against us is for us.”⁵⁸

This might sound a bit glib or facile, inasmuch as it overlooks the complicity of the churches in persecution across the centuries. On the other hand, Bonhoeffer goes to lengths to distinguish his exegesis of those passages from any “metaphysical speculation,” preferring to describe this historical development as a process through which the church “learnt of the wide extent of her responsibility.”⁵⁹ Moreover, it attests to the priority Bonhoeffer gave to experience in his evaluation of religious endeavor. This is important to bear in mind when we read what Bonhoeffer wrote to Eberhard Bethge that “living completely in this world” requires a commitment to “this-worldliness” that does not abandon Christian belief but, instead, is heightened by “taking seriously, not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world — watching with Christ in Gethsemane.”⁶⁰

This is how we discover the meaning of a religionless Christianity, which is not a Christianity with no religion or form or dogma. It is, rather, a Christianity that prioritizes Christian commitment and experience above those things. It is the commitment to reach out to men and women in the world and to share in their suffering because an incarnated God did so, as well. It is to experience suffering and, in experiencing it, to understand what it means to be Christian in a way that sterile words and dogmas cannot convey.

Conclusion

The turn of some Christian writers toward existential philosophy as they take as their inspiration the idea that existence and experience can disclose transcendence to us with more clarity than metaphysical speculation or pious devotion is reflected in Delp and in Bonhoeffer. These two figures, travelling separate but similar journeys, vindicate experience as an existential phenomenon that speaks with lucid forcefulness to the lives of men and women living today. Moreover, the events through which these two men lived — and, amid which they gave up their lives — disclosed the futility of clinging to the shopworn bromides that the Christianity of their time offered to guide faith in political life. The fervent gestures and pious words of the

homines religiosi had done nothing to prevent the rise of Nazism and little to blunt it. In the end, it was resisters like Delp and Bonhoeffer (who questioned the adequacy of form and dogma), not their ecclesiastical superiors, who provided models of resistance and examples of Christian witness amid the violence and fear of their time. Delp and Bonhoeffer not only challenged the anti-Christian political environment but sought to find some new way to approach Christianity and the men and women of the twentieth century in a way that would be constructive, beneficial, and humane.

The similarities we can identify in Delp's and Bonhoeffer's separate experiences of *the view from below* are remarkable enough. Yet, even more remarkable is the effectiveness with which they communicated those separate, intimate experiences and drew useful observations from them for our benefit. Those observations have several remarkable points of similarity, as well. Both Delp and Bonhoeffer recognized the profound changes the last several centuries have brought about in human circumstances, and observed further that danger lay in the fact that the churches have not kept pace with those changes, nor have they really tried to keep pace. Preferring, perhaps, to try to wait out modernity and hope the world simply might revert back to a time when Christianity wielded a greater influence in human affairs, the churches sat disdainfully on the sidelines and watched the world go by. This had sobering consequences, for most common criticisms of secular modernity generally are correct. Men and women need the churches, and without them they are unmoored, afflicted by anomie and alienation in a world that no longer holds religious inspiration in esteem. Worldly allurements of wealth, power, social prestige, and every other type now compete on a level playing field with the more demanding path of spiritual enlightenment, and the results are predictable.

Both Delp and Bonhoeffer pointed toward a more interior, less externally structured Christianity, beyond the "sterile" and "peremptory" religion of their time. They found available religious expressions, generally, to be rote and formulaic, locked in a bygone era and pronounced by men who seem not to understand the changes that have taken place around them. Marvelous scientific progress has brought humanity a previously undreamed capacity to build and to destroy, just as political progress has placed responsibility for the human community in each person's hand with a blank ballot. Never, perhaps, have men and women needed more the spiritual reassurance of a mature faith. Perhaps the world never more had needed the critique that an articulate and engaged Christianity could have offered in the 1930s and the 1940s. But those benefits were not available and, instead, in the absence of guidance from the churches, men and women turned to the alluring promise of a terrestrial paradise as the Nazis promised — or, later, as Stalin or Mao promised. As Delp and Bonhoeffer each observed, the pious *homines religiosi* abandoned the world to the predations of totalitarian ideologues all too happy to supply their answers to the questions of twentieth century men and women, and to offer their own solutions. There were exceptions. Christians could look in those days to Paul Tillich, or to the example of other martyrs like Franz Jägerstätter or Maximilian Kolbe, in addition to Delp and Bonhoeffer. But they were *exceptions*. The churches

as institutions and social or political structures had been shaped by the environment of Reformation or Counter-Reformation — a time little different from the medieval world, and one in which the problems that faced a largely-illiterate and short-lived human community were dramatically different from totalitarian barbarity on a global scale. The churches chose not only to remember that world, but to prize it above the one in which they (and the rest of Christendom) found themselves during the 1930s and 1940s. The task before exceptional characters like Bonhoeffer and Delp was to try to articulate the Christian response to their time against the backdrop of the inertia of the churches.

The significance of finding these similarities between the responses of Delp and Bonhoeffer derives from the fact that they stood so much apart from church institutions and structures while yet adhering faithfully to the person of Jesus throughout their lonely explorations along the boundaries where Christian revelation meets human existence. Their working separately and yet each coming to the same indictment of the churches, each independently coming to value existence and experience as a guide, grab our attention. To include the mention of Paul Tillich is no coincidence. Tillich, as is the case with Bonhoeffer, often can be found condemned as a pantheist or has been identified with radical or “death of God” theology. Yet Tillich’s theology sits in the same indeterminate place where we find Delp and Bonhoeffer groping toward an expression of what their experience with Nazism had taught them. Tillich, too, takes up *The Meaning of Despair* and expresses it as an intimation of *Nonbeing* tied up in the fear that our lives are awash in “futility” that proceeds from “our having to die.”⁶¹ Tillich also speaks of a need “to transcend theism” and to find a “source of the courage to be” in “the ‘God above God,’” a phrasing so strikingly similar to Bonhoeffer’s formulations that we can understand why Tillich and Bonhoeffer have invited comparisons.⁶² Tillich’s target is “the theistic objectification of a God who is being,” an objectification that has made God into “an object for us subjects” in a way that can make God, in the truth of His being, unknowable to us.⁶³

How is it we are incapable of knowing God, as Tillich suggests, and as both Delp and Bonhoeffer agree? It seems the reply must be something like that of the Christian Existentialist, Gabriel Marcel, who said that we have so thoroughly elevated the rational and functional view of reality as to have permitted the “psychological and pseudo-scientific category of the ‘purely natural’” to objectify God at such a distance that we no longer can identify ourselves with Him.⁶⁴ At this moment, it would be useful to recall how explicitly Bonhoeffer rejected approaching our understanding of Christ on a rationalistic basis. And, perhaps a more contemporary word might add weight to that notion. David Walsh wrote recently of “the process of objectification by which we have succeeded in dominating much of the world in which we live,” and encouraged us to abandon it, to “abandon the effort to stand apart from reality” so as to “behold the reality by which we are sustained.”⁶⁵ The Christian insistence on a personal God, the persistent visual reminder that the Crucifix offers of a God who suffered, alerts us to how necessary our immersion in existence and experience is if we are to “behold the reality by which we are sustained.” Suffering may perhaps be the key that unlocks that reality most efficiently.

Our suffering can intensify our existential awareness, perhaps because suffering is an insistent reminder of the impermanence of our temporal existence. The awareness of death and the dread of nothingness (non-being) is the condition that has defined existential philosophy for at least a century. Yet, it is a mistake to perceive that dread as a requirement to “place the subject in supreme isolation over the whole of reality” and create a “closed self” from which “no bridge can be found toward the other.”⁶⁶ This is the flaw in the work of existentialist philosophers such as Sartre, from whom Walsh and Tillich labor to distance themselves in order to arrive at a more useful existentialism. Instead, suffering can disclose the inner contours of reality in a way far more durable than the rational schemes or impoverished existentialism so much more familiar to philosophical conversation. To see reality from the ground of experience in this way may bring about terrible despair. Delp wrote of his own experience, the “dangers and setbacks we encounter at every level of existence,” and the “wounds” we feel “When faith wavers, hope disappears, love grows cold, adoration ceases, doubt nags and the whole life is shrouded in a winter landscape.”⁶⁷ Perhaps it is useful to dwell also on Delp’s own experience that, despite those doubts and setbacks, despair may not win. Indeed, with faith *the view from below* reveals something far more luminous than we can find anywhere else.

Søren Kierkegaard described the “peculiar” existential articulateness of despair as “the disconsolateness of not being able to die,” or to end a condition that we find to be intolerable.⁶⁸ That condition is the intrusion of nothingness into a life aware of its impermanence and without any sure anchor. In such a condition, death (non-being) cannot offer a release: if nothingness could relieve nothingness, there would be no need to dread it. Martin Heidegger wrote, most perceptively, that “*Angst* individuates Da-sein to its own most being-in-the-world,” a feeling he boiled down to “not-being-at-home.” Heidegger cautioned that “‘real’ *Angst* is rare,” and “Often...is ‘physiologically’ conditioned.” However, “The physiological triggering of *Angst* is possible only because Da-sein is anxious in the very ground of its being.”⁶⁹ We can take despair, *Angst*, and a more general suffering each and all to manifest what Marcel described as “the ontological need,” a yearning for the awareness of being.⁷⁰ Even the most ordinary suffering may be understood this way, as an expression of how our uncertain existential condition individuates an anxiety already present in the structure of human consciousness and reality. There is little alternative to despair amid suffering without some ready answer to our yearning for being.

Of course, for Kierkegaard the *Sickness unto Death* finds its cure in faith, the satisfaction of the ontological need which even Heidegger acknowledged (speaking of our “state of decline” in “the absence of a god” whom “philosophy” and “all purely human reflection and endeavor” cannot replace).⁷¹ The suffering of Delp and of Bonhoeffer, was not of a trivial character, and it was the suffering of men who possessed faith. These facts are significant. Yet, those facts alone do not explain why we acquire the intuition of faith that our suffering has meaning. Heidegger was not a religious man, and neither Kierkegaard nor Heidegger was imprisoned. Paul Tillich leaves us no martyrdom or document of personal suffering. Yet, all came to un-

derstand (if not to embrace) the need for an anchor in faith. What the experiences of Delp and Bonhoeffer reveal to us, in the way that they arrive at the same insights as the philosophers, is the compatibility between an existential understanding and Christian faith. This, as we have suggested, already is understood instinctively by many people. What perhaps is more important is how Delp and Bonhoeffer each ratified the necessity of Christianity for a useful existentialism.

One can either give into the despair that comes in every life or one can find hope. Alfred Delp wrote with poignant awareness of his situation that, "whoever isn't able to accept death hasn't lived right." Bonhoeffer was equally plain in suggesting that, "we really belong to death already, and that every new day is a miracle."⁷² Indeed, Bonhoeffer is even more articulate on this point in his *Stations on the Road to Freedom*, among which number "Discipline" and "Action," and which are followed by "Suffering." There he says, "Your hands, so strong and active, are bound; in helplessness now you see your action is ended" ... [and Death] ... "greatest of feasts on the journey to freedom eternal" ... where ... "we may see that which here remains hidden."⁷³ A Christian understanding of human life can lend insights in the dark moments and can help us to reply to the despair and suffering we encounter in life. Through Christianity we find that suffering frees us, but we must suffer in order to come to appreciate this.

So we can say that existentialism is not incompatible with Christian faith, as we can say that existentialism perhaps needs faith, whether Christian or some other form, in order to elude the dark implications of the radically isolated subject. Gabriel Marcel and Tillich have made these kinds of arguments already. Perhaps, finally, what distinguishes the experience of reading Delp's and Bonhoeffer's prison writings is to see how their existential awareness was ignited by their experiences of suffering, and how that awareness produced compatible insights into the Christian situation of our era that are critical to building and maintaining a Christianity that can serve men and women today. To appreciate that distinction, in turn, requires us to acknowledge that Christianity in the twenty-first century needs to reassess the value of experience and existence against what rationalism and a petrified Christian tradition offer. Perhaps we even can say that the experience of Delp and Bonhoeffer persuades us that *Christianity needs existentialism* if it is to build and maintain a Christianity that speaks to men and women of our time. Indeed, to return to a fully immersed sensation of suffering, experiencing it as men and women experience it, and placing nothing before it is an exercise in Christian *ressourcement*, backing away from the rationalism that has grown up in the tradition and returning Christian political thought to the martyrs and the Cross where it always has belonged.

Building up that Christianity will require a willingness to assess the historical situation of men and women as honestly as we must assess the role that the churches play in political life, economic life, and social life today in a critical and constructive way. As Delp and Bonhoeffer each make plain, that will not be easy and the churches will not always come off heroically. Neither will the way forward be perfectly clear, for the difficulty of articulating propositions and dogmas is a recurring theme in these reflections we have explored here. The figures

named here (Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Marcel, Tillich, and Walsh) have taken up that task, each from startlingly different bearings, and all recognized the vital link of faith to existence in how we approach human problems. Bonhoeffer added to that list “[Karl] Barth, Emil Brunner, Karl Heim,” and “Reinhold and Richard Niebuhr,” all of whom offer insights that can press us further in this direction.⁷⁴ Theological and philosophical voices in the Catholic Church who will proceed in this way are few. Much work remains, and for its various difficulties the work will require courage. Yet, if we value the redemptive and didactic value of suffering, and if we prize *the view from below*, there may be no more urgently prophetic voices for Christianity today than Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Alfred Delp.

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¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (3rd ed., Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1971; reprint, New York: Touchstone, 1997), 282.

² Alfred Delp, S.J., *Prison Writings* (Bloomsbury Publishing Co. Ltd., 1962; reprint, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 149.

³ Alfred Delp, S.J. to Luise Oestreicher, after 11 January 1945, in: Mary Frances Coady, *With Bound Hands: A Jesuit in Nazi Germany* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2003), 186.

⁴ Coady, 86. A more comprehensive biography of Delp is available: Roman Bleistein, S.J., *Alfred Delp: Geschichte eines Zeugen* (Frankfurt/Main: Knecht, 1989). For the English language reader, the Coady biography offers a sufficient (if not critical) account of Delp's life.

⁵ Alfred Delp, S.J. to Luise Oestreicher, end of October 1944, in: Coady, 89. Alfred Delp, S.J. to Sister Chrysolia, mid-November 1944, in: Coady, 91. Alfred Delp, S.J. to Marianne Hapig and Marianne Pünder, 22 November 1944, in: Coady, 94.

⁶ Coady, 75.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

⁸ Alfred Delp, S.J. to Luise Oestreicher, end of November 1944, in: Coady, 96.

⁹ Alfred Delp, S.J. to Unknown, December 1944, in: Coady, 126.

¹⁰ Alfred Delp, S.J. to M., 28 December 1944, in: Coady, 132.

¹¹ Alfred Delp, S.J. to Greta Kern, 16 January 1945, in: Coady, 193.

¹² Alfred Delp, S.J. to M., after 11 January 1945, in: Coady, 183.

¹³ Meister Eckhart, *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, eds. And trans. Edmund Colledge, O.S.A. and Bernard McGinn, volume in *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 31.

¹⁴ Alfred Delp, S.J. to M., 3 January 1945, in: Coady, 149.

¹⁵ Martin Menke refers to “Delp's ethnic prejudices and his unshakable belief in German destiny,” in: Martin Menke, “Thy Will Be Done: German Catholics and National Identity,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 91:2 (2005), 314.

¹⁶ Alfred Delp, S.J. to M., New Year's Night 1944-1945, in: Coady, 139.

¹⁷ Menke, 311. Menke cites this conclusion to: Karl Rahner, “Einleitung zu den Texten,” in Alfred Delp, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. I, ed. Roman Bleistein (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), pp. 43-50. See also Delp, “Kirchlicher und Völkischer Mensch” in Delp, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. I, pp. 106-107.

¹⁸ Alfred Delp, S.J., “The Tasks in Front of Us,” *Prison Writings* (Bloomsbury Publishing Co. Ltd., 1962; reprint, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 95.

¹⁹ Thomas Merton, “Introduction,” *Prison Writings* (Bloomsbury Publishing Co. Ltd., 1962; reprint, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), xxiii.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xxiv.

²¹ *Ibid.*, xxxii.

²² Delp, “The Tasks in Front of Us,” 95, 96.

²³ *Ibid.*, 96.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁵ To offer only one illustration, Hannah Arendt described the Catholic Church as “an institution and, especially since the Counter Reformation, more concerned with maintaining dogmatic beliefs than the simplicity of faith,” in:

Hannah Arendt, "The Christian Pope," *New York Review of Books* 4:10 (17 June 1965), 15. Of course, a broad literature that addresses alterity and difference has explored this tendency in a variety of contexts, including gender, post-colonial history, and the visual arts.

²⁶ Delp, "The Tasks in Front of Us," 95.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 90-92, *passim*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 88, 90.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁰ Alfred Delp, S.J., "Meditations," *Prison Writings* (Bloomsbury Publishing Co. Ltd., 1962; reprint, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 19.

³¹ Delp, "The Tasks in Front of Us," 92-93.

³² *Ibid.*, 94.

³³ *Ibid.*, 94.

³⁴ "Was the assassination of a tyrant morally justified?..Among the Jesuits there were also differences. Rösch seems to have been against tyrannicide. Delp and König seem to have argued in favor. It is unlikely that any of them, even Moltke, held unwaveringly to one position or the other"(Coady, 66).

³⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "After Ten Years," *Letters and Papers from Prison* (3rd ed., Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1971; reprint, New York: Touchstone, 1997), 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 17 (*n.2*).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁸ Isaiah 53:11.

³⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Eberhard Bethge, 9 March 1944, in: *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 232.

⁴⁰ Only days before Bonhoeffer's arrest, his father had been awarded the Goethe Medal for Art and Science by Hitler. Bonhoeffer's own involvement in intelligence activities assured him some friends and allies to offer him protection. And, even at the most practical level, the guards at Tegel were said to marvel at Bonhoeffer's gentle manner with them. Bonhoeffer's death was grisly and shocking — he was hanged several times before dying, we might presume, of a slow and painful strangulation. However, during the months when he wrote from prison, Bonhoeffer's conditions appear to have been relatively comfortable.

⁴¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Sorrow and Joy," in: *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 335.

⁴² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R.H. Fuller and Irmgard Booth (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1959; reprint, New York: Touchstone, 1995), 112-113.

⁴³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Eberhard Bethge, 21 July 1944, in: *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 369.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 369.

⁴⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Outline for a Book," *Letters and Papers from Prison* (3rd ed., Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1971; reprint, New York: Touchstone, 1997), 380.

⁴⁶ "One may ask whether there have ever before in human history been people with so little ground under their feet — people to whom every available alternative seemed equally intolerable, repugnant, and futile, who looked beyond all these existing alternatives for the source of their strength so entirely in the past or in the future, and who yet, without being dreamers, were able to await the success of their cause so quietly and confidently," in: Bonhoeffer, "After Ten Years," *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 3.

⁴⁷ Bonhoeffer, "Outline for a Book," *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 381.

⁴⁸ Bonhoeffer, "After Ten Years," *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 15.

⁴⁹ We must recall how fragmentary and embryonic Bonhoeffer's writings from this last period of his life were, but it seems only fair that we should credit his struggle to derive "religionless Christianity" from belief in the person of Jesus as a desire to keep even 'religiousness' fully Christian. See his full Letter to Eberhard Bethge of 30 April 1944 for a convincing account of this, at: Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 278-282.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Man in Contemporary Philosophy and Theology," lecture at the University of Berlin, 31 July 1930, quoted in: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, trans. Edwin H. Robinson (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 11.

⁵³ Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, 61.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. Neville Horton Smith (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1955; reprint, New York: Touchstone, 1995), 341. In *Christ the Center*, Bonhoeffer also took up the church/state relationship briefly: "So, just as the Church is the centre of the state, it also is its boundary. It is the boundary of the state in proclaiming with the cross the breaking-through of all human order...Therefore the relationship of Church and state since the cross is new. There is a state, in the proper sense, only when there is a Church. The state has its proper origin since and with the cross (like the Church) in so far as this cross destroys and fulfills and affirms its order"(63).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 342.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 342. In light of what Bonhoeffer had written in *Christ the Center*, clearly there are some questions about the

meaning of the “independent” function of the state, as distinguished from the spiritual function of the church. The questions are intriguing, but not specifically related to our purpose here.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 59-60.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 60-61.

⁶⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Eberhard Bethge, 21 July 1944, in: *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 370.

⁶¹ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 56.

⁶² Ibid., 186.

⁶³ Ibid., 185.

⁶⁴ Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existence*, trans. Manya Harari (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 1, 4.

⁶⁵ David Walsh, *The Modern Philosophical Revolution: The Luminosity of Existence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 10-11.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁷ Alfred Delp, S.J., “Making Ready,” *Prison Writings* (Bloomsbury Publishing Co. Ltd., 1962; reprint, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 141, 143.

⁶⁸ Søren Kierkegaard, “Sickness unto Death,” *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, ed. Robert Bretall, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 341-342.

⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 176-177.

⁷⁰ Marcel, 14.

⁷¹ Martin Heidegger, “Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten,” *Der Spiegel* 30 (Mai, 1976): 209. Trans. by W. Richardson as “Only a God Can Save Us” in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (1981), ed. T. Sheehan, pp. 45-67.

⁷² Bonhoeffer, “After Ten Years,” *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 16.

⁷³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Eberhard Bethge, 21 July 1944, in: *Letters & Papers from Prison*, 370-371.

⁷⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ*, ed. John de Gruchy (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987), 29.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S JOURNEY OF RESISTANCE

■
BY RICHARD A. LOOMIS

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is viewed as a hero of the resistance movement against Hitler and the Nazis. Although his resistance moved from the realm of the church to that of political resistance, it was informed by a carefully thought out theology which sought to understand the implications of a costly obedience to the risen Christ.

To understand Bonhoeffer's journey of resistance requires first the examination of the events in three periods of his life. The first chapter is his visit to America in 1930-31. Here he made several important friendships, and was exposed to life in Harlem, as well as to the African-American religious experience. It was also here that he became a Christian.

The second centers on his attempts to speak out against the Nazi persecution of the Jews and his life in the Confessing Church.¹ It is appropriate here to trace the events that moved him from the role of pastor/teacher to that of conspirator.

The third chapter is that of his recruitment into the German intelligence service, the *Abwehr*, and his activities in the anti-Hitler resistance movement. Because members of his family played a large part in the resistance, their activities will be examined here as well.

An accounting of the events of Bonhoeffer's life is not enough to fully understand Bonhoeffer's journey. What is also required is an examination of those works which may shed light on his thinking. The reality of God in Christ, the cross, 'costly' grace, and responsible action are the themes that inform what he thought were the necessary responses of both the individual Christian and the church as a whole to the unjust actions of the state.

Finally, it is appropriate to examine what this means for Christians in the twenty-first century. The limited successes and ultimate failure of the conspiracy raise questions about the nature of responsible actions, and what that might mean for the church today. Questions are also raised concerning the church's relationship to Israel and the Jewish people. By attempting to answer these questions the church engages in acts of remembering, which gives meaning to the past as well as guidance for the future.

In 1929, Bonhoeffer accepted a Sloane Fellowship to Union Theological Seminary in New York. His studies began in 1930 and ended in 1931. During this time he formed several important friendships. The first was with Paul Lehman, a fellow student who became his closest American friend. During their frequent discussions Lehman showed Bonhoeffer that theology only made sense when it intersected with one's political and social concerns. Lehman also made Bonhoeffer aware of America's racial problems, as well as the need for the American Church to become more active in promoting civil rights and economic justice.²

Bonhoeffer also became friends with a French student — Jean Lasserre. At first the relationship was colored by Bonhoeffer's anti-French feelings, but this changed as the two got

better acquainted. Lasserre was a pacifist who thought it impossible to be a Christian and a nationalist.³

Bonhoeffer's thinking was broadened by this friendship. He became aware that the communion of saints also included the French. His interpretation of the Sermon of the Mount also changed. Lasserre insisted that being a Christian meant 'quite simply' following Jesus' commandments and practicing Christian fellowship without regard for frontiers.⁴

Bonhoeffer was shocked by the racial segregation that he encountered in America. At Union he found others who shared and informed his criticism. Professor Reinhold Niebuhr recommended African-American literature to his students. Paul Lehman and his wife Marion showed Bonhoeffer the "other America." This included the political and social commitment of the church "from below" in the midst of the Great Depression, which was often combined with an untheoretical, direct understanding of the Bible as "good news for the poor."⁵

Bonhoeffer's brother Karl-Friedrich, who had just returned to Germany from a trip to America, shared his concerns. Karl-Friedrich felt that the race issue was *the* problem and that it had figured in his decision not to accept a position at Harvard. He also noted that it was a bigger problem than the "Jewish question in Germany."⁶

Another friend was Frank Fisher, a black student from Harlem. Through him Bonhoeffer got to know the ghetto at close quarters. In the black churches he became even more aware of just how narrow his view was of the "communion of saints." It was not long before he became a regular attendee at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem.⁷

Perhaps most importantly, it was during this time that Bonhoeffer appropriated the reality of Christianity. In the experience of worship in the black church, he found a faith that took on social, emotional, and physical dimensions. This faith went beyond mere theory, it became reality.⁸

The American visit changed Bonhoeffer deeply. The many insights that he brought home with him would shape his theology and his response to the events that would soon take place. The examination of his attempts to speak out on behalf of the Jews and his life in the Confessing Church follows.

From the beginning, anti-Semitism was a stated policy of Hitler and the Nazi party. In September 1919 Hitler wrote his first *Memorandum on the Jews*. In it he stated that the goal of a "rational antisemitism" [*sic*] was the complete removal of the Jews.⁹

After coming to power, the Nazis wasted no time in implementing Hitler's plans. On March 28, 1933, Hitler's government gave instructions to the Party to carry out a general boycott on all Jewish businesses and professionals on April 1. It was the first of a long series of measures meant to bring about the removal of the Jewish population from German society. It was followed on April 7, 1933 by the Aryan Clause, which banned all Jews from civil service.¹⁰ The pro-Nazi German Christian party would force the Evangelical Church to adopt it the following August and September.

The passage of the Aryan Clause led Bonhoeffer to write an essay entitled *The Church and*

the Jewish Question. In it he sought to work out its possible consequences from both a political and ecclesiastical standpoint. It was originally written for a discussion group of pastors meeting at the home of Gerhard Jacobi. Because it made no distinction between baptized and non-baptized Jews in its discussion of anti-Jewish discrimination and persecution, some pastors left the meeting.¹¹

Although Bonhoeffer writes that the church cannot demand definite actions of the state, it can and should ask the state whether its actions can be justified as legitimate actions of the state. Such an action is that which leads to law and order, not lawlessness and disorder.¹² Bonhoeffer claims that the state is limited in two respects. When there is too much law and order or too little law and order, it is then that the church is compelled to speak. Too little law and order leads to lawlessness. Too much law means that the state has expanded its power to the degree that it deprives Christian preaching and faith of their rights.¹³

Bonhoeffer sees that there are three actions that the church can take against the state: (1) ask the state if its actions are legitimate; (2) aid the victims of state actions; (3) refrain from binding the victims under the wheel of the state, but become instead a spoke in the wheel itself. In the Jewish problem, the first two actions will be the demands of the hour. The third action is direct political action and is only possible and desirable when the church sees the state creating too much or too little law and order.¹⁴ While Bonhoeffer thinks that such action must be decided by an Evangelical Council, the possibility is left open that such a council may occur outside of the institutional synods of his own Prussian Protestant church.¹⁵

In the latter part of the essay it is clear where Bonhoeffer stands. He writes that the church cannot allow the state to prescribe the church's actions towards the church's members. The matter is a religious, not a racial one, and anyone who cannot tolerate fellowship with Christians of Jewish descent removes himself from where the church of Christ stands.¹⁶

Around the same time, Walter Künneth wrote a parallel paper entitled *Das Judenproblem und die Kirche*. While there are points of agreement between the two, Künneth argues that the exceptional regulations for the Jews should be valued by the church as "lawful measures to protect the German people from contamination." He also argues that the church should stand for the "elimination of the Jews as a foreign body from the nation's life." This Künneth claims is to be done, however, in a manner consistent with a Christian ethic.¹⁷

Despite its demands, the Reich government did not have access to the totality of the data regarding the ancestry of its citizens. Registry offices only had data for two generations, thus anyone wishing proof of Aryan ancestry (up to the third or fourth generations) had to ask the parish pastor or priest to provide a 'Proof of Aryan ancestry' on the basis of the church registry. By providing these documents the church was supporting the anti-Jewish program of the state. Bonhoeffer suggested the idea of a ministers' strike; that they should go on strike if asked to write out the Aryan certificates. Such an act would have been a direct political action by an Evangelical Council.¹⁸ It never happened.

In August 1933 Bonhoeffer and Wilhelm Vischer drafted *The Church and the Jews* as part of

the Bethel Confession. The Confession was directed against the German Christians and their intention to enforce the Aryan Clause within the church. Its importance lies in its expressions of new beginnings in the attitude of all Christians towards the Jews. However, because of heavy-handed editing and other changes which diluted key points, Bonhoeffer would refuse to sign the final draft.¹⁹

Although not without its problems, the work contains several important points. The first is that God's choosing of Israel remains in effect. Second, the church has received from God the commission to witness to the Jews, and that to refuse is to be disobedient to the Lord. Third, the community of those who belong to the church is not determined by blood or race but by the Holy Spirit and baptism. Fourth is the rejection of any attempt to confuse the historical mission of any nation with Israel's commission in sacred history. Fifth, no nation can be commissioned to avenge Christ's death. Sixth, the notion that the faith of Jewish Christians is affected by their ancestry and is Judaistic heresy is rejected. Seventh, the confession is opposed to the attempt to turn the German Evangelical church into a nationalistic church of Aryan descent. Finally, there is a call for Gentile Christians to expose themselves to persecution rather than surrender their brotherhood with Jewish Christians in the church founded on Word and Sacrament.²⁰

Bonhoeffer left Germany in late 1933 to pastor a German congregation in London. Before he left, he and Martin Niemöller began to organize the Pastors' Emergency League, which was founded to help pastors who had suffered under Nazi laws. The decision to form the league was made when the effects of the Aryan Clause began to be known. The Declaration which he and Niemöller drafted became the call for ministers to form the League which would later become the foundation of the Confessing Church.²¹

The Declaration stated that according to the confessions of the German Protestant Church, the teaching office of the church is bound up in a call in accordance with the order of the church. The Aryan Clauses put forward a principle which violates the confession. It also affirmed the right of pastors to preach and administer the sacraments so long as they have not been dispossessed by formal proceedings. It finally stated that those who give assent to the breach of the confession excluded themselves from the community of the church.²²

The persecution of the Jews continued. In 1935 the Nuremberg race laws took effect. Jews were banned from cinemas, swimming baths, restaurants, and universities. Mixed marriages were banned and relationships between Jews and Aryans were outlawed.²³

Following his London pastorate, Bonhoeffer became director of a Confessing Church seminary at Finkenwalde in 1935. The Jewish question was still on his mind during this time. In a lecture to his students he taught that the church is called to take to itself all the sufferers and the forsaken. The point at which the decision will be made as to whether the church will still be called the church is the Jewish question.²⁴

In 1936 Bonhoeffer engaged in a fierce debate with Professor Baumgärtel over the interpretation of Nehemiah-Ezra. Baumgärtel was professor of Old Testament at Griefswald and a neu-

tral in the church struggle. Bonhoeffer had written that the church today was continuous with the faith community of the Old Testament. Baumgärtel's response was the traditional Lutheran view that the Jews had killed Jesus and therefore there was no continuity. Although he rejected that idea, Bonhoeffer could not directly reply; the times were not safe for him to do so.²⁵

On November 9, 1938, the infamous *Kristallnacht* occurred. According to Nazi reports 20,000 men were sent to concentration camps, 92 Jews were murdered, 191 synagogues were burned, and hundreds of Torah scrolls were desecrated and destroyed. Later orders came for the 'Aryanization' of Jewish property, houses, factories, and shops: 7500 shops were destroyed and Jews were charged for damages or forced to sell their houses for below their value.²⁶

Bonhoeffer made no public statement either on or after *Kristallnacht*. At the time he was teaching at a clandestine seminary in Pomerania located in the villages of Köslin and Groß-Schlönwitz. News was sparse and the only news that Bonhoeffer received was the information relayed in a telephone call to his parents. A discussion arose among the students around the notion of the curse which had haunted the Jews since Jesus' death. Bonhoeffer, refusing to see in the Nazis' actions any fulfillment of a curse, rejected the argument. He also warned: "If the synagogues burn today, the churches will be on fire tomorrow."²⁷

Bonhoeffer's silence was because of the fact that he had no public pulpit from which to address the situation. There was also the fact that part of life in the illegal seminary included the understanding that its teaching should not be endangered through courageous public action.²⁸

The actions Bonhoeffer did take were far from spectacular: a couple of pencil marks in the Bible he used for daily meditation and a sentence inserted into a circular letter sent to his former students. The pencil marks consist of the date "9-11-38"²⁹ inserted next to Psalm 74:8, with an exclamation mark and several lines against verses 8-11. According to Bethge, these marks were made at the time and are the only ones in his entire Bible.³⁰ The text reads as follows:

8. They said to themselves, 'Let us together oppress them,'
And they burnt every holy place throughout the land.
9. We cannot see any sign for us, we have no prophet now;
No one amongst knows how long this is to last.
10. How long, God, will the foe utter his taunts?
Will the enemy pour scorn on your name forever?
11. Why do you hold back your hand?
why keep your right hand within your bosom? (Revised English Bible)

Circular letters were sent out to former students every two weeks. In the letter dated November 20, 1938, Bonhoeffer inserted the following sentence: "During the last few days I have been thinking a lot about Psalm 74, Zechariah 2:8, Romans 9:3f and 11:11-15. That really makes one pray." These Bible references do not appear in his earlier work, at least not in the way that they are read here. Psalm 74 had never been referred to until then. Here Bonhoeffer mentions it to his students to invite them to pray it with him despite their anti-Jewish theological assumptions.³¹

Bonhoeffer had used the Zechariah text in a circular letter the previous December. The occasion had been the arrest of twenty-seven members of the Finkenwalde community.

Then, he used it to refer exclusively to the persecuted church. Now, however, he writes in terms of its validity for the Jews, leaving no room for a theology of punishment.³²

The two passages from Romans are read in similar fashion. In 9:3f, he is now teaching against the church's doctrine of the rejection of the Jews. He asks how the church could forget Paul's teaching about the continued existence of Judaism. In 11:11-15, he writes that Paul bears witness to Israel's final acceptance as "life from the dead" and connects it with the final reconciliation of the world.³³

9:3. I would even pray to be an outcast myself, cut off from Christ, if it would help my brothers, my kinsfolk by natural descent.

9:4. They are descendents of Israel, chosen to be God's sons; theirs is the glory of the divine presence, theirs the covenants, the law, the temple worship, and the promises.

9:5. The patriarchs are theirs, and from them by natural descent came the Messiah. May God, supreme above all, be blessed forever! Amen.

11:11. I ask, then: When they stumbled, was their fall final? Far from it! Through a false step on their part salvation has come to the Gentiles, and this in turn will stir them to envy.

11:12. If their false step means the enrichment of the world, if their falling short means the enrichment of the Gentiles, how much more will their coming to full strength mean!

11:13. It is to you Gentiles that I am speaking. As an apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of that ministry,

11:14. yet always in the hope of stirring those of my own race to envy, and so saving some of them.

11:15. For if their rejection has meant the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance? Nothing less than life from the dead!(REB)

According to Bethge, two things were troubling Bonhoeffer as he reflected on the prayer that he had been brought to. First, the role of a preacher of unbounded salvation in a church that was so far removed from the Jews. Can this role be fulfilled without solidarity with them? Second, he was struck by the double "how long" of Psalm 74. When will the pogrom end? How will it end? What will be the cost to Christians for having allowed things to come to the point of November 9? As we shall see, the answer for him led to his joining the anti-Hitler conspiracy in 1940.³⁴

The year 1940 marked a high point in the fortunes of Nazi Germany. It was also a low point in the fortunes of the Confessing Church. The failures of the church led Bonhoeffer in 1940 to include a confession of guilt in his *Ethics*. The following gives a sense of the whole:

The Church confesses that she has witnessed the lawless application of brutal force, the physical and spiritual suffering of countless innocent people, oppression, hatred and murder, and that she has not raised her voice on behalf of the victims and has not found ways to hasten to their aid. She is guilty of the deaths of the weakest and most defenceless brothers of Jesus Christ.³⁵

In looking at the record of the Confessing Church, it becomes obvious that it is a mixed bag. On the one hand, it produced the Barmen Declaration. It continuously opposed the creation

of an Aryan Christianity, leading Hitler to view Christianity as a Jewish invention.³⁶ In 1943 the Council of Brethren proposed a statement for a synod at Breslau that condemned the destruction of the Jews for the first time.³⁷

Because of the ideological rebellion of the churches, Nazi leaders soon saw the need to annihilate Christianity in Germany. Martin Bormann declared Christianity and National Socialism incompatible. Hitler declared that the German nation would only be safe when the church problem was “cleared up.” It was only the needs of the nation at war which kept the church safe; the end of the war ended the threat.³⁸

On the other hand, Confessing pastors swore an oath of allegiance to Hitler.³⁹ The Confessing Church was silent after *Kristallnacht*.⁴⁰ What resistance that was offered came from pastors, communities, and individuals. They also bore the brunt of persecution. Quite often, for political reasons, church governments refused to show solidarity with those arrested and condemned. According to Scholder, right up to the end of the war no Catholic or Protestant bishop was arrested for political reasons.⁴¹

At the time, many believed that the excesses of the Nazis were marginal and temporary. No one foresaw a “final solution.” The Bonhoeffer family was one of the few not deluded about Hitler’s character.⁴²

There were also problems of a theological nature. Many in the Confessing Church took for granted the notions of divine curse, punishment, and replacement. They were unaware of Martin Luther’s anti-Semitism because those writings were not included in the textbooks of the time.⁴³ That there might be a connection between the new racial policies and ancient theological and ecclesiastical discrimination against the Jews was not reflected on.⁴⁴

Finally, perhaps the Confessing Church’s greatest weakness lay in its narrow focus on internal issues. Such a narrow view led it to be silent on broader social issues such as the persecution of the Jews. It also left room for less militant leaders to argue for compliance with most of the government’s demands.⁴⁵

The final period in Bonhoeffer’s life is marked by his recruitment into the *Abwehr* and his involvement with the anti-Hitler conspiracy. The primary motive for his joining the conspiracy was the Reich’s anti-Jewish policies.⁴⁶ At the same time, he was influenced by his family, many of whom were actively involved in the resistance.

The Bonhoeffer family associated with Jews as a matter of course at the levels of friendship, vocation, education, and marriage. These relationships existed solely with assimilated or liberal Jews who saw themselves more as liberal Germans. Although the family was aware of a cultural anti-Semitism, they did not believe that it would ever take hold in a major way. At the same time they firmly resisted all racial theories.⁴⁷

The family was involved in acts of resistance from the beginning. On the first day of the anti-Jewish boycott of 1933, Grandmother Julie Bonhoeffer broke through a cordon of S. A. guards in order to make a purchase at a Jewish shop.⁴⁸ Brother Klaus was a lawyer for *Lufthansa* and a member of the resistance. Brother-in-law Rüdiger Schleicher was also

involved with the resistance. He joined the Nazi party after much discussion with the family. He collaborated with Klaus and would ultimately be executed with him in 1945.⁴⁹

Hans von Dohnanyi was married to Dietrich's sister Christine. A constitutional lawyer, he had worked in the Reich Ministry of Justice. In 1933 he started a file of Nazi atrocities. In 1940 he worked in the *Abwehr* in the political department under Admiral Wilhelm Canaris. The Gestapo would later call him "the author of the movement to remove the Führer and the brains behind it."⁵⁰ He too was executed.

Brother Karl-Friedrich also resisted. An agnostic natural scientist, he did not actively enter the resistance movement. He did, however, offer shelter to his Jewish colleagues right up to 1945. He would be a steady presence for his younger brother Dietrich.⁵¹

Gerhard Leibholz was married to Dietrich's twin sister Sabine. In April 1933 he was appointed Professor of Constitutional Law at Göttingen. However, his lectures were canceled because he was a Jew.⁵² In 1938, with Dietrich's help, he and his family immigrated to England.⁵³

The Bonhoeffers did what they could to aid their Jewish friends. In July 1937 Dietrich's close friend Franz Hildebrandt was arrested by the Gestapo. After intense efforts by the family he was released four weeks later. His passport was still valid, so the family was able to help him immigrate to England.⁵⁴ However, they were not always successful. In 1941 an elderly Jewish neighbor received her deportation notice. There was little that could be done, except help her pack. She was sent to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt.⁵⁵

In May 1939 Bonhoeffer received his conscription papers. Through the intervention of his father they were withdrawn.⁵⁶ At the urging of friends and family, Bonhoeffer made a second trip to America in the summer of 1939. It turned out to be a short trip. Despite the threat of war and his own uncertain future in Germany, he returned. The tension and uncertainty that had plagued him during the trip disappeared during the return voyage.⁵⁷ In September 1939 Bonhoeffer attempted to get an appointment as an army chaplain. The answer came the following February. It was negative.⁵⁸

Bonhoeffer continued to do church work during this time, although it was becoming increasingly restricted. After the Gestapo closed Finkenwalde he was involved in the 'collective pastorates,' which enabled him to continue teaching his students. He continued until his students were called up into the army. In March 1940 the police closed down the operation.⁵⁹

Bonhoeffer's next appointment was as church visitor for the Confessing Church. His duties included giving information and theological guidance, as well as preaching to those who had been called up for military service. He made three journeys for the East Prussia Council of Brethren. The first went without incident. The second, which took place in July 1940, saw a conference of Confessing Church students broken up by the Gestapo. The third was made in August 1940. Before departing he met with Dohnanyi, who assured him that the *Abwehr* would be interested in his journeys on the grounds that they could provide the *Abwehr* useful information. In order to guard against Gestapo interference he was given a commission. The trip passed without incident.⁶⁰

On September 4, 1940, Bonhoeffer was informed that an order had been issued by the Reich Security Office forbidding him from making any public speeches. It also ordered him to regularly report his movements to the police at his place of residence. Teaching was also forbidden, as was visiting for the church and the exercise of his ministry in Berlin. Dohnanyi and Colonel Hans Oster intervened on his behalf. Bonhoeffer was declared indispensable to the *Abwehr* and sent to the Munich office. On January 31, 1941, the order to report was canceled.⁶¹

Bonhoeffer was now a member of the *Abwehr*. He would remain so until his arrest on April 5, 1943. At the same time he was an active member in the anti-Hitler resistance. He used his friendship with Anglican Bishop George Bell to pass information of the conspiracy's activities to the British government.⁶² In September-October 1942 he aided in the drafting of reports on the deportations of Jews that were happening in Berlin, Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Elberfeld. These reports were sent to Dohnanyi, who sent them to General Beck in the hope that the military would either intervene or speed up preparations for the revolt. He also took part in 'Operation 7' — an operation that was ordered by Admiral Canaris, head of the *Abwehr*. It involved sending a group of twelve to fifteen Jews to Switzerland on the pretext that they would be used by the *Abwehr*. It took a year for the operation to be successfully completed. Unfortunately, the affair raised suspicions in the Reich Security Office and would lead to the arrest of all those involved, including Bonhoeffer.⁶³ The failure of the July 20, 1944 attempt — out of the *Abwehr* and led by Count Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg — to kill Hitler ultimately sealed the fates of all the conspirators.

Having examined key events in three periods of Bonhoeffer's life as these events trace his journey from pastor/theologian to conspirator, it is appropriate now turn to his theological writings to see how his theology influenced his actions.

For Bonhoeffer, the starting point of Christian ethics is not the reality of self, the world, or a set of standards and values. It is the "reality of God as He reveals Himself in Jesus Christ."⁶⁴ This Christ is the Christ of the whole Scripture, and it is to him alone that one looks, not Christ and the Law, Christ and religion, or Christ and the world.⁶⁵

Bonhoeffer sees the cross as central. It is laid on all believers. In the encounter with Christ the old self dies. Discipleship is the giving over of our life to death. Yet the cross is not the terrible end to a happy life but the beginning of one's communion with Christ. The call to discipleship, the baptism in Jesus' name, means both death and life.⁶⁶

Understanding the true nature of grace is crucial for Bonhoeffer. He makes a clear distinction between 'cheap' and 'costly' grace. Cheap grace is grace without price or cost. It is grace as a doctrine or principle. Forgiveness of sins is proclaimed as general truth and an intellectual assent to that idea is deemed sufficient. It is a cheap covering of sin with no contrition required. It is a grace that one can grant oneself. It is grace without Jesus.⁶⁷

Costly grace is the call of Jesus, the gospel which must be sought again and again. Such grace is costly because it calls one to follow and it is grace because it calls one to follow Jesus. It is costly because it costs a man his life and it is grace because it gives him the only true life.

It is costly because it condemns sin and it is grace because it justifies the sinner. It is costly because it cost God the life of His Son and it is grace because God delivered Him up for us.⁶⁸

Although saved from evil, the Christian must still live in a world where evil is all around. To hold one's own one must combine simplicity with wisdom. To be simple is to fix one's eye solely on God and to cling to the commandments, judgments, and mercies which come from Him every day. Bound by love of God, one is freed from the problems and conflicts of ethical decision. Wisdom is seeing the reality of the world in God. It knows what is essential and seeks to acquire the best possible knowledge about events without becoming dependent on it. The wise one knows that the purest of principles and the best of wills cannot help reality; only the living God can.⁶⁹

This sounds theoretical, and in a sense it is. But Bonhoeffer is not interested in abstract theory. For him, to see Jesus is to see God and the world in one.⁷⁰

According to Bonhoeffer, Christians are called to share Christ's large-heartedness by acting with responsibility and in freedom when the hour of danger comes, and by showing a real sympathy that springs from Christ's liberating and redeeming love. One cannot merely wait and look on; the Christian is called to sympathy and action by the sufferings of the brother or sister for whose sake Christ died.⁷¹ "For the follower of Jesus there can be no limit to who his neighbor is, except as the Lord decides."⁷² It becomes an experience of incomparable value to see the great events of world history from the perspective of those who suffer.⁷³

Responsible action must begin with the reading of the Bible. Bonhoeffer makes it clear, however, that there is a right and a wrong way to approach Scripture. One does not find in it such clear instructions that one is absolved from acting in faith. It does prove that a course of action was justified; only God knows that. It is not an insurance policy that guarantees that one's actions will please God. It does only this; it calls one to faith and obedience to the truth in Jesus. It does not first show one the path to take; allowing one to decide whether or not to follow it. Only when the journey has begun does one know whether or not the way is the right one.⁷⁴

Responsible action is a key theme in Bonhoeffer's thought. Such action depends on a God who demands it in a bold venture of faith and who promises forgiveness and consolation to the one who becomes a sinner in such a venture.⁷⁵ This is important, for responsible actions can incur guilt. If one tries to preserve their own personal innocence at the expense of responsibility for others, they become cut off from the redeeming mystery of Christ's bearing guilt without sin.⁷⁶ Guilt must be covered by the costly grace of God's forgiveness.

When a man takes the guilt of responsibility upon himself, he imputes this guilt upon himself alone. He answers for it and accepts responsibility for it. He is dependent on grace. Before the rest of humanity he is justified by necessity; before himself he is acquitted by his conscience; but before God he hopes only for mercy.⁷⁷

Bonhoeffer's actions as a conspirator are rooted in his theology of discipleship and responsible action. He does not offer an all-encompassing program for confronting the government.

In fact, he argues that unless the government compels one to offend against a divine commandment, one must obey that government. In cases of doubt one must obey. But if the government attempts to control the belief of the congregation, one may disobey. One cannot, however, make a generalization that government has no claims for obedience. Disobedience must be a concrete decision made in a particular case.⁷⁸

All of this does not mean that Bonhoeffer's ethic is a situational ethic, in which action is determined only by the situation at hand. Nor is it a set of rules or general principles. Rather, it is an ethic of obedience that is rooted in his intimate relationship with the risen Christ.

Having examined the elements of Bonhoeffer's life and the theology as they shaped his journey of resistance, it is now required to ask what it all means for the church in the twenty-first century.

It is tempting to view Bonhoeffer's life and see failure. His writings did not sway many to take a stand for the Jews, and his actions in the anti-Hitler conspiracy had limited success. Hitler was not killed, the death camps did not go away, and the killings went on without pause. Operation 7 was but a small victory in the face of such mass killings, and in the end it led to the arrest and death of its participants. Instead of clarity of vision there is ambiguity.

The crucial question for Karl Barth in evaluating the conspiracy was whether it was an act of obeying God, not whether it conformed to a general rule. He recognized the ambiguity in the situation. In the matter of obedience in a specific situation, it is difficult at best to tell whether there has been a divine command.⁷⁹

Bonhoeffer did not offer a moral justification for the conspirators' actions; instead he appealed to God's justification of sinners. Because responsible actions can place the individual in situations that are ambiguous at best, they carry great risk of personal corruption; one must put complete trust in God's forgiveness and grace.⁸⁰

The limited success of Bonhoeffer's stand is not a sign of failure. Lives were saved, and his writings are still relevant today. The call to responsible action does not come with a guarantee of success, only the promise of the presence of the calling Lord. Worldly measures of success cannot be the determining factor in deciding whether or not to take a stand.

Bonhoeffer's writings were both the foundation of his actions and the expression of his stand for the victims of the Third Reich. They are also a reminder to the church that her fate is still linked to that of the Jewish people. Because Jesus was a Jew, the history and destiny of Israel are bound to the church. To abandon the Jewish Jesus is to open the door to remaking Him in the image of whatever is popular at the time. For the church to abandon Israel is to turn its back on the God who remains faithful to His covenant and promises. The church must always remember that it is the wild olive grafted on to the native tree.

In remembering Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one must discard the glasses of rose colored hindsight. He was a man of his times, and he was not perfect. One must also avoid the trap of mere sentimentalism. Remembrance goes beyond just getting the facts straight. Remembrance challenges communities to face questions about their beliefs and the nature of responsible

actions. James McClendon puts it well:

By recognizing that Christian beliefs are not so many propositions to be catalogued or juggled like truth-functions in a computer, but living convictions which give shape to actual lives and actual communities, we open ourselves to the possibility that the only relevant critical examination of Christian beliefs may be one that begins by attending to lived lives. Theology must be at least biography. If by attending to those lives, we find ways of reforming our theologies, making them more true, more faithful to our ancient vision, more adequate to the age now being born, then we will be justified in that arduous inquiry. *Biography at its best will be theology.*⁸¹

May the church honor these memories.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The Confessing Church's beginnings lay in the German Evangelical Church, the largest Protestant body in Germany, which consisted of 28 regional or territorial churches representing the Lutheran, Reformed and United Church denominations. In 1933, it came under the influence of the pro-Nazi German Christian party. The Confessing Church came into being in May 1934, as a protest to German Christian policies and the Aryan Clause.

² Geoffrey B. Kelley and F. Burton Nelson, "Editors' Introduction," in *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, eds. Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 9-11.

³ Wind, Renate, *A Spoke in the Wheel*, trans. John Bowden (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 52-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 50-1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁹ Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich, vol. I, Preliminary History and the Time of Illusions: 1918-1934*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 255.

¹⁰ Pastors in the German Evangelical Church were paid by the State by means of a church tax, thus, non Aryan pastors would be subject to dismissal.

¹¹ Kelly and Nelson, 137.

¹² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The Church and the Jewish Question," in *No Rusty Swords* (hereinafter *NRS*) ed. and introduced by Edwin H. Robertson, trans. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 223-224.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 224-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 225-6.

¹⁵ Alejandro Zorzin, "Church versus State: Human Rights, the Church, and the Jewish Question," in *Bonhoeffer for a New Day: Theology in a Time of Transition*, ed. John W. de Gruchy (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 245.

¹⁶ *NRS*, 227-9.

¹⁷ Eberhard Bethge, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Jews," in *Ethical Responsibility: Bonhoeffer's Legacy to the Churches*, eds. John D. Godsey and Geoffrey B. Kelly (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 62-3.

¹⁸ Zorzin, 252-3.

¹⁹ Kelly and Nelson, 140.

²⁰ *NRS*, 240-2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 248.

²² *Ibid.*, 248-9.

- ²³ Wind, 117.
- ²⁴ NRS, 235.
- ²⁵ William J. Peck, "The Role of the 'Enemy' in Bonhoeffer's Life and Thought," in *A Bonhoeffer Legacy: Essays in Understanding*, ed. A. J. Klassen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981), 352.
- ²⁶ Eberhard Bethge, "One of the Silent Bystanders? Dietrich Bonhoeffer on November 9, 1938," in *Friendship and Resistance: Essays on Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Geneva: WCC Publications; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 61.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 60, 62.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 61-2.
- ²⁹ 9 November 1938.
- ³⁰ Bethge, "Bystanders?" 63-4.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 64-5.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 66.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 66-7.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.
- ³⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. Neville Horton Smith (New York: Collier, 1986), 114.
- ³⁶ Klaus Scholder, *A Requiem for Hitler and Other Perspectives on the German Church Struggle*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 176.
- ³⁷ Bethge, "Jews," 89.
- ³⁸ Scholder, *Requiem*, 116.
- ³⁹ Bethge, "Bystanders?," 68.
- ⁴⁰ Wind, 126.
- ⁴¹ Scholder, *Requiem*, 138.
- ⁴² Bethge, "Jews," 57-8.
- ⁴³ Bethge, "Bystander?" 62-3.
- ⁴⁴ Bethge, "Jews," 64.
- ⁴⁵ Robin W. Lovin, *Christian Faith and Public Choices: The Social Ethics of Barth, Brunner, and Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 128-9.
- ⁴⁶ Bethge, "Jews," 76.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-1.
- ⁴⁸ Renate Bethge, "Bonhoeffer's Family and its Significance for His Theology," in Larry Rasmussen with Renate Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer His Significance for North Americans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 9-10.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.
- ⁵⁰ Wind, 141-2.
- ⁵¹ Eberhard Bethge, "The Nonreligious Scientist and the Confessing Theologian: The Influence of Karl-Friedrich Bonhoeffer on His Younger Brother Dietrich," in *Bonhoeffer for a New Day: Theology in a Time of Transition*, ed. John W. de Gruchy (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 41-2.
- ⁵² Wind, 70.
- ⁵³ Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian, Christian, Contemporary*, trans. Eric Mosbacher, Peter and Betty Ross, Frank Clarke, and William Glen-Doepel, ed. Edwin Robertson (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., Fount Paperbacks, 1985), 536-7.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 487.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 649.
- ⁵⁶ Eberhard Bethge, Renate Bethge, and Christian Gremmels eds., *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Life in Pictures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 174.
- ⁵⁷ Bethge, "Bystanders?," 69.
- ⁵⁸ Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 570.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 494.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 599-602.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 602-5.
- ⁶² Lovin, 129.
- ⁶³ Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 526, 649-52.
- ⁶⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. Neville Horton Smith (New York: Collier, 1986), 189-90.
- ⁶⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller, revised by Irmgard Booth (New York: Macmillan Paperbacks, 1968), 255, 192.
- ⁶⁶ *CD*, 99.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 45-7.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-8.
- ⁶⁹ *Ethics*, 68-9.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

⁷¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, enlarged edition, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Collier, 1972), 14.

⁷² *CD*, 143.

⁷³ *LPP*, 17.

⁷⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Way to Freedom*, ed. and introduced by Edwin H. Robertson, trans. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 176-7.

⁷⁵ *LPP*, 6.

⁷⁶ *Ethics*, 241.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 342-3.

⁷⁹ Lovin, 151.

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⁸¹ James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*, new edition (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 22.

SECTION 4
REMEMBERING
JEWISH RESISTANCE

1 MAN'S FIGHT:

1,200 SAVED



TEMITAYO OPE PETERS

Imagine living in “a world of pine, oak, and fir trees, of occasional patches of wild mushrooms, of scattered bushes of blackberries and blueberries” (Duffy 78). Imagine sleeping “under quasi-tents made from blankets propped up by tree branches” (Duffy 78). Imagine living in a camp surrounded by “an armed guard to protect ... [it] from intruders” (Duffy 78). This is the world a Polish Jew named Tuvia Bielski sought to maintain and sustain a community of about 1,200 Jews in the midst of the Holocaust. With the help of two of his younger brothers, Asael and Zus, Tuvia created a forest enclave for these Jews, and even participated in guerilla warfare like attacks against the Nazi forces at the same time. Often described as a tall, gentle, and graceful man with a seducing smile, he was known to shoot one of the members of his own community when he was disrespected by that person, but he was also to weep openly in front of the entire group when moved (Tec 4). In the face of severe persecution, Tuvia dared to defy the Nazis. More important than fighting however; “As commander of a forest community dedicated to the preservation of life, Tuvia Bielski gave to the Jewish people many precious gifts: hopes, dreams, and their very lives” (Tec 209).

Late in the 1800s Elisheva and Zusya Bielski settled in Stankiewiczze, a village in Western Belorussia, which is modern day Belarus. They were the only Jews in the small village of only six families. The Bielskis pursued a quiet life on a small farm, which also included a mill. Tsarist anti-Semitic restrictions made it hard for them, but they learned to deal with the restrictions by countering the racist acts with kindness and peace. This conciliatory attitude was passed on to their son David, who took over the family business once his parents became too old to handle it on their own. Like his parents, he always chose to pursue peace over fighting for his family's rights. In the early 1900s he married Beyle Mendelavich, and she bore him ten sons and two daughters. Of these twelve (eleven survived infancy), three would later engage in the “largest rescue of Jews by Jews in all of WWII,” one of their descendents realized decades later (Ziska). Their names were Tuvia, Asael, and Zus.

Tuvia, the third oldest child of the family was born in 1906. He never showed much interest in school, but he did prove that he had a special knack for learning languages. During WWI, he learned German from German soldiers who were stationed near his family's home. He also mastered Polish, Belorussian, and Russian, which along with German, he was able to speak without the trace of his native accent. As a young teen, Tuvia developed “a reputation for ferocity.” Unlike his father, he would not put up with the abuse of his family's property and produce by their peasant neighbors (Duffy 9). He was not afraid to use violence to get across his intolerance of the abuse (Duffy 9). During his early years, Tuvia briefly served in the Polish army, and had a short involvement with the Zionist movement. His involvement with the movement was short because he was “... too independent to identify with a particular po-

litical party" (Tec 10).

Known as the "Clark Gable of the Bielskis," many "men were drawn to Tuvia's independent spirit, vigor, and alertness, [and] women found him irresistible" (Duffy 16, Tec 10). "Anyone who met him invariably felt that he was bound for something greater than operating a store in a rural backwater;" and indeed, Tuvia never had any intention of getting stuck running the rural family business either (Duffy 17). Striving for a life more than what could be provided him from operating the mill, he married a wealthy and somewhat older woman named Rifka in 1929. Through her willing tutorage and wealth, Tuvia became a very fashionable and well-mannered man. Although their marriage ended in an amiable divorce ten years later, the skills he was able to procure through this marriage proved to be very useful to him as he developed into the leader of the "forest Jews."

Asael, the fourth oldest child was born in 1908. He was known for being relatively quiet and practical. As his parents got older, and his older siblings married and moved away, running the family business fell to him. Despite his reserve, he was not averse to having a good time, and "he had no compunction about having romantic flings with gentile girls" (Duffy 18). He also was said to have a temper which could be provoked for a good cause. But Asael was not one to be easily provoked. His younger brother Zus who was "flamboyant and pugnacious," and born in 1910, helped him manage the business (Duffy 18). Unlike his brother, "[Zus] was a fighter — when challenged, he threw punches first and asked questions later" (Duffy 19).

Following the Russian invasion of Poland in 1939, the areas the brothers were living in as well as their home village, became part of the "200,000 square kilometers of new territory" the Russians occupied once the invasion was over (Duffy 21). An increase of anti-Semitism came with the newly occupying forces so the brothers strove to maintain lives that would keep them out of the sights of the abusive, occupying Russian forces. Moreover, beginning in the winter of 1940, "refugees from the Nazi-occupied sections of Poland streamed into the region, many bearing tales of Nazi atrocities" (Duffy 24). Although the brothers heard many first-hand accounts from refugees who said that the Nazis were "treating Jews 'worse than dogs,'" they "believed very little" (Duffy 25).

When the Nazis surprised the Soviet Union with an attack on June 22, 1941, both the Russians and the Bielski brothers were not prepared for what was going to happen next (Duffy 25). In the midst of the resulting pandemonium, all three of the brothers returned to their family home in Stankiewiczze, where they felt they would be the safest. Soon afterwards however, Nazi soldiers kicked them out of their home, forcing them to briefly move to a nearby city. From there they decided to retreat to the forest surrounding their home.

For a time, Asael and Zus traveled back and forth from the forest to their wives still living in nearby cities, until their elderly father was arrested by the Nazis in an effort to capture the "dangerous" brothers. When he was released a short time later, he delivered this simple message to his sons; "Stay in the woods. The war won't last forever" (Duffy 38). Because the rest of

the family did not go into hiding, they were terrorized as the Nazis tried to force them to divulge the location of the brothers. Despite the abuse, no one would give them up. Eventually two of their brothers, and later their parents, along with Zus's wife, and young daughter were rounded up with other Jews from surrounding areas, and machine-gunned to death. After finding hiding places for the rest of their surviving family members, Asael and Zus returned to the forest burning with fury and itching to avenge the lives of their murdered relatives. A few other vengeful Jews joined them, and thus under the leadership of Asael, the "forest Jews" were born.

Although Tuvia also hid in the forest, he hid separately from his brothers. His genteel looks, unmarred speech, and cultured manners made it easy for him to pass as a gentile peasant. As a result, he spent a lot of time going into the cities and mixing with Germans in an effort to learn their intentions. The Germans made it very clear to him that they wanted to totally extinguish the Jew and he was often forced to listen to very abusive anti-Semitic comments. Nevertheless, Tuvia did not on any occasion give himself away to the Germans with whom he conversed. This is due in part to the social skills he picked up from his first wife, and also to a remarkable gift of restraint. Through these encounters, it became very "clear that he possessed remarkable gifts of control, cunning, and self-possession not found in the average man" (Duffy 43).

Soon after he first entered the forest, Tuvia tried several times to team up with friendly gentiles to form partisan units. Each time, anti-Semitic attitudes always arose, and he was then forced to abandon these groups. Finally, in the early months of 1942, he decided that the only way to successfully fight the Nazis was to reunite with his brothers. Upon his return to the forest surrounding Stankiewiczze, he quickly took over the leadership of the small group of fighters Asael had gathered around him. None of the members of this group who were interviewed after the war could say that, "either of the younger brothers would have made a more suitable commander" (Tec 45). In most aspects, "Tuvia was intellectually superior to both of them, he knew how to conceptualize. He was the man of ideas, the one who made the decisions" (Tec 45). These aspects, as well as his compassion, ferocity, and natural aptitude for leadership, are what led to his becoming the voted leader and ultimately becoming the respected leader of the "forest Jews" which had originally been established under Asael's leadership. Under his guidance, the fledging group began to acquire more weapons and ammunition — the first steps needed in order to become an independent and self-reliant partisan unit.

With weapons secured in mid 1942, Tuvia and his brothers began to recruit. They visited their male family members in hiding, and convinced the family members to join them in the forest. As the German killing sprees intensified, they started to pressure both male and female family members still living in city ghettos and in hiding with sympathetic gentiles, to join them in the forest. They told them that "escape to the forest offered their only hope of survival." Although many found it impossible to imagine abandoning their families to live outside "the bounds of civilization," others could see that life in the forest offered not only the

possibility of survival, but also the chance to engage in active resistance to the Germans" (Seane 37).

As their notoriety grew and conditions in the ghettos worsened, more and more Jews started joining the brothers. They were now faced with a dilemma; "How many more Jews would they be able, and willing to accept?" (Duffy 87). Asael and Zus thought "only young Jewish fighters — and few at that — should be admitted into the group," but Tuvia thought otherwise" (Duffy 88). He could not bear the thought of openly turning away anyone who came to them for shelter. "This is our way," he would later say, "we don't select, we don't eliminate the old, the children, [or] the women" (Tec 3). Knowing that greater numbers would be more beneficial for their protection; "Tuvia was eager to accept into his unit as many Jewish fugitives as possible and he continued to implement this policy despite vigorous internal opposition" (Tec 45). Later his son Mickey Bielski would note; "He knew the meaning of life. Tuvia knew that killing one, or ten, or thirty or forty, or a hundred Germans was in the scope of things meaningless, but to save one Jew was an affront to the Germans ... It had more meaning to rescue than to kill" (Ziska).

Harkening back to his days as a young soldier in the Polish army, Tuvia dealt with the large numbers of women, children, and old, by organizing the group like a military unit (Duffy 90). He broke the large group into much smaller groups of 20 or 30. The groups were mainly comprised of those who were dependents, but they also contained at least five or six fighting men apiece. The fighting men, who housed with them, were responsible for the protection of each dependent in their group. In an effort to increase organization, Tuvia placed his brothers, Asael and Zus, in the positions of second and third in command, with Zus's being mostly responsible for scouting since he was the most knowledgeable of the forest's layout. He also placed other men he respected and valued in positions to oversee that food was always available, that they were well protected, and to return to the various surrounding ghettos to rescue as many willing Jews as they could.

In order to survive, Tuvia knew that "the unit would have to operate as a single, cohesive entity. Everyone would have to follow orders, whether or not they agreed with them," so "he had no patience for dissenters" (Duffy 90). When new recruits arrived he would line them up and tell them the rules of the unit. One young recruit remembers Tuvia saying;

I don't promise you anything, we may be killed while we try to live. But we will do all we can to save more lives. This is our way, we don't select, we don't eliminate the old, the children, the women. Life is difficult, we are in danger all the time, but if we perish, if we die, we die like human beings (Tec 4).

In the beginning, the group's survival depended on its ability to move quickly to escape detection. Initially, this was relatively easy, and for much of the time the group "lived on the edge of the forest without permanent habitation, eating meals outside and sleeping in simple shelters under the trees" (Seane 39). All this changed however as the group expanded, so Tuvia oversaw the construction of semi-permanent wood-and-earth dugouts called "ziemlankas" for them to sleep in (Tec 86). It has been noted by many partisans that these struc-

tures were so well “camouflaged that visitors had to be guided to them, even from quite close by, and German reports note admiringly their invisibility to the naked eye from as close as 30 yards” (Seane 41).

In the summer of 1942, the group was threatened with exposure, but after moving north for a while, they were able to return to the dugouts, which they now called home (Tec 86). By early 1943, the forest Jews now numbered about three hundred. The Bielski partisans “[were] evolving into a society of exceptional creativity and resilience,” and their home in the forest was, “one of the few places in all of occupied Europe where Jews lived with some measure of freedom” (Duffy 133). Nine months after they had been established, the Bielski partisan unit reached a count of seven hundred members (Duffy 157). As their numbers continued to swell, “Tuvia understood the necessity to run the base with a firm, sure hand” (Duffy 159).

The growth caused dissent among the fighting men, because they did not want the burden of having to provide food for such a large group of people. As fugitives with no possessions of their own, they were forced to rely on whatever they could steal from the already severely deprived peasants close at hand. Aware of this, Tuvia recalled after the war:

Although I tried hard to prevent robberies, in truth the line distinguishing robbing from ‘taking,’ upon which our very existence depended, was very thin. The partisan ethics dictated that taking ‘essentials’ was permissible, whereas taking anything that could be termed ‘luxuries’ was robbery (Tec 73).

Many Polish farmers accused them of raiding and unacceptably violent behavior, but one former Bielski partisan justified the group’s behavior. After the war he recalled:

You had to survive. There was a big family to feed. So if you went on a mission for supplies you didn’t come in with money and say, ‘how much do you want?’ You had to take it out of the garden. Survival is a very very powerful means ... you don’t even think about being nice, you can’t be nice (Ziska).

Tuvia sought to justify his unit’s “stealing” by telling those who participated in food excursions to take only what was necessary, as well as to aim for the “richer” peasants first and only move on to the poorer ones if necessary. As time passed however, they began to obtain not just bare essentials, but live chickens, cows, pigs, and even horses, which he and his brothers used to mark their authority; all of which had formerly belonged to some unfortunate peasant family.

In the summer of 1943, the group suffered a surprise attack from Nazi soldiers who happened upon their camp by following a trail of blood left by some irresponsible fighters bringing back a dead cow. Ten of the members of the group were killed. With more attacks sure to be on the way now that the Nazis knew their location, Tuvia made the difficult decision to move the group across enemy-occupied territory to the northern forest of Belarus called the Naliboki Puscha. It was “a primeval forest filled with canals and swampland ... difficult to get into once penetrated, [and] difficult to get out of” afterwards (Duffy 164). The move meant leaving behind an area he knew well for a new area with which he was unfamiliar, but Tuvia decided that the move was in their best interest if they wanted to continue to survive. After a few days of marching, he successfully led his unit, now comprised of over eight hundred

members, to their new home in the heart of the Naliboki Puscha. Here he and his followers sought to rebuild the homes they had left behind in the forests surrounding Stankiewiczze. It was also here buried deep in a semi-impenetrable forest that Tuvia and the rest of his Jewish followers were finally able to build a largely permanent home, free from the fear of discovery by the Nazis because of the denseness of their new forest home.

As they settled in, Tuvia supervised the construction of new dugout homes, which were three-fourths underground. Each underground hut housed about forty people on long narrow bunks organized by families, villages, or skill. They also constructed kitchen areas strictly for cooking, a "sausage-making facility and smokehouse," a bakery, a bathhouse, medical and dental facilities, a building for skilled workers to work in, as well as a small mill (Duffy 212-215). They had seamstresses, tailors, leatherworkers, watchmakers, tanners, metal workers, and blacksmiths all working to produce products not just for the group's enjoyment, but also for the enjoyment of other nearby partisan groups (Duffy 215-217). The camp also boasted a school, theater productions, an airport, and even a jail to house disobedient members of the unit (Duffy 217). A visiting partisan to this village within the forest said, "I have a tremendous respect for this man, Tuvia Bielski. He created an almost normal atmosphere under abnormal conditions" (Seane 45). It was a fully functional Jewish village, in the midst of German occupied territory; "It wasn't a fairy tale. It was a real place" (Duffy 239).

Tuvia recognized and understood the difficulty his group would have with safety, since they were comprised of a large amount of women, children, and older adults. Although he frequently stated, "it was better to save one Jew than to kill twenty Germans," he also felt that the group should start to develop more partisan relations (Tec 46). As a result, he developed a close partnership with a Russian partisan group operating close by under the leadership of a young Russian named Victor Panchenko. In tandem with Panchenko's partisan unit as well as separately, Bielski partisans participated in many acts of defiance against the Nazis and their supporters. At one point, Tuvia incorporated another small Jewish partisan group into his unit, because the increased number of fighting men added to the overall safety of the group. Personally, he also joined the organized Russian partisan organization, placing himself directly under Russian authority. For the most part this was a benefit for both sides. One Jewish fighter who also was a member of a Russian partisan group said, "They knew every tree. Without Beliskian partisans, we could go no place. We would get lost" (Ziska). Ultimately though, the Russians did what Tuvia fought so hard not to do all along; they made him split the group into two smaller ones consisting solely of the family group, and the other solely of the fighting group (Tec 126). In the end though, this did not affect them much because the forest's density proved to be adequate protection for the family group against searching Nazis.

With an increase in his power as the group grew bigger, the noble character people noticed in Tuvia before the war stayed largely intact. He did become a little aloof, but almost all of the surviving Bielski partisans said that "free access to his person might have reduced his prestige and interfered with his effectiveness" (Tec 133). They also noted that even though he and

those close to him never seemed to be wanting of money, food or supplies in anyway, if approached he was always willing to share (Tec 185). One aspect of his character that changed however, was his aptitude for violence. As time progressed, he became more and more apathetic towards violence. In the movie *Defiance* (2009), which is based on the brothers' story there is a scene during which some of the Bielski partisans beat a captured soldier to death. Tuvia is depicted as extremely apathetic, and "he looks on from nearby, neither participating nor intervening" (Dichek 37). Whether or not this event actually occurred in this specific way, there are sources who say that there were four German soldiers who were captured near the end of war and beaten to death by Bielski partisans in the center of camp (Tec 196). No source notes that Tuvia did anything to prevent this event from occurring. On the contrary, accounts of his and his brothers' participation in gruesome killings of those responsible for denouncing Jews do exist (Tec 77-78). These accounts, as well as his seemingly apathetic attitude show "that the Bielski's and their comrades were not without their flaws. They, at times, also reveled in their violence ... even as they were the hunted they also took some relish in violence themselves" (Dichek 38). Nevertheless, Tuvia forever remained a hero to most of his partisans (Ziska).

On July 10, 1944, the Bielski partisans were suddenly liberated when Soviet soldiers came and occupied the area. Tuvia's last act as leader was to lead his unit out of the forest paradise they had called home for about a year. On the way out, one man disregarded his leadership, and Tuvia responded by shooting him on the spot. Most of those who saw this act however, forgave him for it. They explained that the liberation "all happened too fast. Tuvia was under pressure. Perhaps he was under tension because he was losing his leadership position" (Tec 200). On the one hand they were sure that Tuvia was happy that they "were going to be free, [but] on the other, he was losing his authority. For him, it had to be a crisis ... after all, till then, Tuvia had had dictatorial power" (Tec 198). On the other hand, they also say "Tuvia was an angel not to have lost his patience more often with his undisciplined people. Indeed, they marvel at his restraint and admire him for it" (Tec 200). In the end, the Bielski unit was "for most of the time about three-quarters... 'older people,' women, and children. Similarly, the group of its young armed men and those capable of using weapons fluctuated between twenty and thirty percent" (Tec 135). Throughout the entirety of its existence, only about forty-nine members were lost. What had started out as a small group of Bielski relatives in 1942 had by its end, become a successful partisan village of a little over a thousand Jews (Duffy 257).

Following the end of the war, and the disbanding of the forest village, the brothers returned to Lida, a town nearby their home village, and obtained jobs in the new Soviet government (Duffy 263). Asael was drafted into the Soviet army soon after the war ended, and, not long after, he was killed. Tuvia and Zus, together with their families, soon moved to Palestine where they settled in Holon (Duffy 269). They made the move because their lives were still at risk in the liberated Belarus because "Stalin saw all those who were independent and free in spirit as foes, as competitors for power" (Tec 202). Once in Palestine, they documented their wartime adventures in a little book written entirely in Hebrew. They pursued meager lives in

Israel until 1955, when they decided to immigrate to United States. Both Tuvia and Zus lived largely quiet and obscure lives until their deaths in 1987 and 1995 respectively. Nechama Tec, one of the few biographers of the Bielski brothers' great deeds during the Holocaust notes:

In the forest Tuvia was a powerful leader widely admired, worshipped by some. He rose to his position of power during extraordinary times. Each time he performed a new miracle that gained a measure of security for his followers his power and authority grew. But as soon as his historical moment passed, the authority of this charismatic leader faltered (202).

Even though he was never formally recognized for his courageous act, which ended up saving 1,200 Jewish lives while he was alive, Tuvia's body was given an honorary burial in Israel after his death.

"Tuvia Bielski was an unlikely leader, an unlikely hero;" so what can one learn from his story? (Tec 205). Edward Zwich, the director of *Defiance* (2009) answered this question precisely. Referring to Tuvia and his brothers Zwich said,

It's remarkable that these unsophisticated, uneducated people, with nothing in their past that would suggest that they were capable, would be able to do something like this. To me, this suggests a more universal theme — about our own resources and who we might be inside when we are tested — that can be inspiring (Dicheck 38).

And truly inspiring it is, even though it is a story that has remained largely unknown. Those who learn this story should be motivated to develop the same sort of self-sacrifice, and leadership Tuvia displayed as the fearless leader of the "forest Jews" during the Holocaust. In closing, it is fitting to recall the remarks of a thankful former Bielski partisan:

Tuvia Bielski was filled with the national pain and the national love, the pain and the love for Jews. He devoted his soul, his brains, and everything else to the rescue of Jews. He saw a chance, a great opportunity, in his ability to save. He was grateful that he could save Jews. For him it was a privilege (Tec 47).

Tuvia truly was a hero.

More often than not, stories of Jewish success and resistance during the Holocaust are overlooked in favor of the more gruesome, and tragic stories. Although tales of the latter category are greater in number than those of the former; this fact does not justify this disregard. Even though the Holocaust is a sad reminder of the fallenness of man, it contains a smattering of redemptive stories such as this. As we honor the memory of those who perished during this tragic event, we must never forget those who defied it through their survival.

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THE PRISONER HOSPITAL AT BUNA-MONOWITZ



BY EWA K. BACON

I. Introduction

Even after sixty years of research into the Nazi concentration camp system there are still little-known stories such as that of the prisoner hospital in the Auschwitz III camp — Buna-Monowitz. While the large labor camps often had some sort of infirmary which became the convenient site at which SS (*Schutzstaffel*) doctors were able to make their “selections,” death sentences for exhausted or ill prisoners, the group of prisoners who organized the prisoner hospital in Buna-Monowitz saved lives. These prisoners managed to bring prisoner physicians together to form a functioning hospital and clinic from mid-1943 until the end of the camps in January 1945. This hospital protected the lives of its patients as well as the lives of the physicians and others who worked there. The Buna-Monowitz prisoner hospital displays the agency of motivated prisoners to organize even in the deadly environment of a Nazi labor camp.

No story coming out of the Nazi concentration camp called “Auschwitz” is simple. The Auschwitz complex encompassed forced labor camps, factories, farms and mines. The function of Auschwitz was to help create the “New Order” of the Nazi Third Reich. Slave laborers, political prisoners, POWs, Gypsies, and the Jews of Europe were brought together here. Infamously, from 1941 to late 1944, Auschwitz also became the site of genocidal extermination of Jews. Nazis intended to clear Polish lands and cities of Slavs to be replaced by German settlers while Polish Jews were to disappear entirely.¹

The main camp, Auschwitz I, accepted its first prisoners, 728 Poles, in June 1940. By October 1941, Auschwitz II, Birkenau, was accepting prisoners delivered via railroads to a selection ramp. Here over a million people were consigned to death and were never counted as inmates of Auschwitz by Nazi record keepers; 400,000 other victims, however, were tattooed and entered the camp rosters. These mostly young and mostly able-bodied men were chosen to labor for the Nazis. Faced with brutal work conditions, infamous living conditions and a starvation diet, only half of them lived long enough to be sent to yet other labor camps or remained in Auschwitz until the January 1945 evacuation. Close to 8000 prisoners, ill and incapacitated, were abandoned and were still in the camps when the Soviets arrived on January 27, 1945. Of the victims of Auschwitz, 90% were Jews and they comprised 20% of all the Jews killed in the Holocaust.² But those who survived Auschwitz, some 200,000, both Jews and non-Jews, worked for the Nazi overlords in factories, mines, farms and in the camp itself.

One part of the story of Auschwitz is the role of German big business. Since the labor camps promised a supply of cheap workers, the German chemical industry conglomerate, I. G. Farben Industrie, decided to place one of its synthetic rubber plants near Auschwitz. Not only was labor available, hired out by the SS at contractually low prices, but the camp was well situ-

ated near railroad lines, with plentiful water supplies and deep in the newly acquired eastern German territories, safe from attack. In 1941 and early 1942 workers walked daily to the factory from the main camp, Auschwitz I. This was augmented by a narrow gauge rail line and finally a separate new camp next to the factory in 1942.³ The influence of the I.G. Farben management was so decisive, that they demanded and received this separate new labor camp to house the slave laborers who were building the Buna facility. The name of this camp was derived from three sources: the small local village (Monowice), the product manufactured there (Buna, a synthetic rubber), and finally by its place in the administration of Auschwitz, the third camp. Buna-Monowitz, Auschwitz III was set up gradually.

II. Buna-Monowitz and I.G. Farben Industrie

The problem of labor: where would the Nazi “New Order” find enough workers to build a Nazi empire? Big businesses, like I.G. Farben and the Krupp Werke, were also seeking workers in a state which needed German men in the army and the war effort. German men were not available to build roads, factories or to run farms. Heinrich Himmler, the head of the *Schutzstaffel*, hoped that the conquest of the U.S.S.R. would provide virtually limitless numbers of men for the planned Aryan state. The German Army had seized 3 million U.S.S.R. prisoners of war in 1941 and Himmler saw them as an “unlimited supply of ready slaves.”⁴ Himmler wanted them sent to Auschwitz and other labor camps, but most of the Soviet POWs perished from mistreatment or from disease or from hunger before they arrived at the labor camps. On January 26, 1942 Himmler retrenched and sent out a directive that read,

[N]ow that Russian POWs cannot be expected, in the coming days I will send a large number of Jews and Jewesses into the camps that are to emigrate from Germany. In the next four weeks you must make appropriate arrangements in the concentration camps for 100,000 Jews and up to 50,000 Jewesses. In the next few weeks the concentration camps will be assigned great industrial tasks.⁵

It was in this atmosphere of the promise of limitless supplies of workers, expendable and always replaceable with new slave laborers that I.G. Farben hoped to create their factory. Yet the reality of using available slave labor proved highly problematic. These “cheap workers,” having begun their journey at the main Auschwitz camp at four o'clock in the morning to reach the factory site by seven o'clock, arrived, tired and demoralized, at the factory site. The narrow gauge railroad did not make up for the fact that life in the Auschwitz I camp was debilitating. Periodically all worker transports stopped as epidemics of louse borne diseases closed Auschwitz completely.⁶ The newly created Buna-Monowitz camp, funded by I.G. Farben, but with prisoner administration by the SS, was organized to overcome the problems of fatigue and unreliable delivery of a daily quota of workers for the Buna plant.

The newly built camp immediately adjacent to the factory site would house 10,000 workers by the end of the war as prisoners from all over Europe arrived in Auschwitz. It opened with 2300 prisoners in November 1942.⁷ Tadeusz Dębski, a concentration camp survivor, writes in the *A Battlefield of Ideas* that,

[M]ost people were completely unprepared for life in the Camps. The large majority of newcomers were stunned by their new experiences. For some the shock was too great. They could not react fast enough to the orders given; their minds seemed frozen, unable to realize their new situations. They became later what [Primo] Levi called the flotsam and jetsam of the Camps. Others learned, some fast, some slowly. Men who had the experience of military service often recognized at once some traits common to army life and adjusted accordingly. The professional criminals remembered life in the large cells of European prisons and tried to continue it, often with success because of the many similarities between prisons and the Camps.⁸

The reality of camp for those who learned fast was that some types of positions in the camp carried much higher survival chances. Working in kitchens, working in barracks as a cleaner or record keeper, working in the position of “functional” prisoner (*Funktionshäftling*) meant access to some more food or to privileges that could mean the difference between life and death. Primo Levi wrote in *Survival in Auschwitz* that his position as a chemist in the Buna plant meant that he had better food and better work.⁹ It was the margin for survival not available to ordinary hard laboring workers. Jan Sehn, the judge who presided over the Auschwitz trials in Poland, reported that the Nazis claimed that heavy workers received 2150 calories and medium workers, 1738 calories per day. The actual amounts were 1733 calories for heavy workers and 1302 for medium workers. The League of Nations published minimum calories needed to sustain health was 4800 calories for heavy workers and 3600 calories for medium workers.¹⁰ The Nazi term for this regime was “extermination by work” (*Vernichtung durch Arbeit*). With low caloric intake, the result was starvation. At this rate of malnutrition, prisoners at hard labor could last on average only three months.¹¹

III. The Crisis: Worker Death Rates

The manager of the Buna plant, Walter Dürrfeld, was livid with the lagging schedule of construction. In December of 1941, he complained that while he had 1000 prisoners on the Buna worksite, their clothing was inadequate; in January 1942 he complained that he wanted more workers, but the Auschwitz Kommandant Höss replied he needed those workers to expand the main camp.¹² The opening of the new Monowitz camp on October 28, 1942 was going to solve the issue of tired and ill workers. Eighty percent of the prisoners marched daily to work at the factory site.¹³ Wooden barracks designed for 50 men each instead housed 250 prisoners. As the camp developed, the carpenters and builders (prisoners as well) could not keep pace and in mid-1943 two huge tents were erected for 1000 men each to join to 60 completed wooden barracks. The census briefly reached 11,000 men, but stabilized at 10,000.¹⁴ And yet, the new camp was not the hoped for solution. Both the SS and the management of I.G. Farben were so enamored by the idea that the supply of slave labor was inexhaustible that they made scant provisions for prisoner health. The corporation, responsible for the construction of the Buna camp, provided only two barracks for an infirmary and Bernd Wagner, a historian of the Monowitz camp, states that in early 1942 “providing medical care for weak or injured prisoners

was clearly not the job of the prisoner hospital."¹⁵

Why not? Why was the prisoner hospital not protecting the prisoners? The reality was that jobs in the 'hospital' barrack provided a measure of safety and were highly coveted and yet they were not staffed by doctors and nurses. Controlling these positions involved not only the SS, but also influential prisoners themselves. One of the most complete records of Auschwitz written by a prisoner is Hermann Langbein's *People in Auschwitz*. Langbein's position as a secretary to the SS physician Dr. Eduard Wirths gave him access to information about camp staffing as well as influence about who would fill desirable, i.e. safe, jobs in the camps. A significant source of tension in the camps was the maneuvering between political prisoners like Langbein and criminal prisoners (*Kapos*) who had been put into management authority in the camps by the SS. In camp parlance, the political prisoners were called Reds (red triangles on their uniforms) and the criminals were called Greens (green triangles). Langbein worked hard to assure that "safe" camp positions were wrested from the Greens and controlled by Reds.¹⁶ Langbein's political ally and friend Ludwig Würl got the coveted position of senior prisoner (*Lagerälteste*) in the prisoner hospital at Buna-Monowitz. Unfortunately for the prisoners, Ludwig Würl was a journalist, a political prisoner from Dachau, but not a physician. The men working at the prisoner hospital in Buna-Monowitz were not ill intentioned, but they were incompetent. The impact was huge: 50% of the prisoners in Auschwitz III, Buna-Monowitz, died between December 1942 and February 1943.¹⁷

IV. New leadership at the Buna-Monowitz Prisoner Hospital (the HKB)

Attitudes toward the slave labor of prisoners were changing at the SS after the invasion of the U.S.S.R. did not produce a deluge of new slaves. The historian Michael Thad Allen traced the cultural change of the Nazi business model to the highest levels of the SS. After 1941, the German SS began to see skilled prisoners as essential to the war effort.¹⁸ A systemic collision was developing between the police brutality of the SS *Kommandants* and the business goals of Himmler's *Schutzstaffel*.¹⁹ Allen states that as a direct result of more professional management among the highest levels of the SS, camp conditions stabilized by the end of 1942.²⁰ The Auschwitz complex was put into the hands of a new *Kommandant*, Artur Liebehenschel, who issued orders on August 19, 1942 to halt the abuse of prisoners. Liebehenschel had been responsible for the whole concentration camp system, the Economic and Administrative offices of the SS (SS-WVHA). But Danuta Czech notes: "The order comes too late and results in no change in camp conditions. In Auschwitz, prisoners are constantly abused by fellow prisoners, predominantly by German criminal prisoners, who are encouraged in this by the SS, incited it, and are never punished."²¹

The conditions at the Buna-Monowitz camp, however, did experience a marked change for the better: the SS started paying attention to the miserable conditions in the prisoner hospital. Dr. Eduard Wirths, major in the SS (*SS-Sturmabführer der Waffen-SS*), served as the Auschwitz garrison physician from September 6, 1942 until January 19, 1945. The continuing crisis with infectious diseases was a problem for the SS and they chose a man of Wirths's high reputation

as the man to stop the labor losses. He was responsible for all Auschwitz camps and sub-camps. He arrived as a reformer and immediately began re-assigning personnel to create a more effective medical service. He ordered the phenol injection killings stopped. Wirths's success was lauded by Höss who declared that Wirths had stopped infectious diseases in the camps.²² Hermann Langbein devotes a section of *People of Auschwitz* to the contradictory character of SS Dr. Wirths.²³ Langbein had worked as Wirths's secretary in Dachau and subsequently two more years in Auschwitz. Langbein, a member of the Communist resistance in the camps, presents himself as an ameliorating influence on his boss. He saw Wirths as exceptionally able, but a man who could come under the influence of a talented subordinate. Langbein describes the relationship between prisoner-functionaries and SS officers as follows:

Several factors combined to produce [my influence on him]: Wirths's attitude toward the crimes committed in the concentration camps, which I was able to study in Dachau; his diligence, which made him look for a secretary who could also handle confidential messages and who had neither the dull indifference nor the limited intelligence of SS Sergeant Richter, the official clerk in his office; the attacks of other SS leaders to which he as an intellectual was subject... — all this combined to further my aim to create a personal relationship between us and then use it for the benefit of the camp.²⁴

One of SS Dr. Wirths's concerns was the miserable state of the Buna-Monowitz prisoner hospital. He decided to promote a Polish physician prisoner to the post of *Lagerälteste* at Buna-Monowitz. He had previously sent Dr. Stefan Budziaszek to the infirmary at the Jawischowitz mine, one of the forty-five odd Auschwitz sub-camps. Wirths transferred Budziaszek to Buna-Monowitz. Antoni Makowski, a physician and a prisoner at Buna-Monowitz, wrote: "Until April 1943 the Austrian Heinrich Schuster was the *Lagerälteste* who just like Wörl was not a physician which stopped neither of them from performing physician's duties at the outpatient clinic."²⁵

Dr. Budziaszek²⁶ had been arrested in Krakow on June 23, 1941 for anti-Nazi activity and after several months imprisonment in Krakow's Montelupich prison was transferred to Auschwitz.²⁷ He worked at Auschwitz I as a nurse from February to May 1942 and was then assigned to the Buna material control laboratory. From September 1942 until June 1943 he worked as a prisoner physician at the Jawischowitz mine until SS Dr. Wirths put him into the Buna-Monowitz camp 'hospital.' Budziaszek was not beholden to Langbein or other politically active prisoners in the Auschwitz main camp and his promotion was not welcome news. Wagner states:

One group of prisoners experienced the reorganization of the hospital as an at least temporary worsening of their position. [Budziaszek's] intervention in the personnel structure of the HKB [prisoner hospital] was accompanied by a complete change in doctors and nurses. Until early summer 1943 all of these functionary positions were held almost exclusively by members of the Communist resistance groups though virtually none of them had medical training. Their reaction was understandably unfriendly since they had lost their privileged positions in the hospital. From their point of view it looked like [Budziaszek's] actions were directed against

the Communist dominated prisoner self-government, even though the reorganized hospital benefited most of the prisoners.²⁸

The prisoner hospital reorganization which now ensued under Budziaszek's leadership transformed the few barracks into a complex organization employing trained physicians and a staff of sixty. Makowski, himself a Polish prisoner-doctor at Buna-Monowitz and a careful reporter of the expansion of the prisoner hospital, states: "[Budziaszek] was a man of great energy, ambition, and talent for organization."²⁹ Budziaszek had extensive contacts with other prisoners, especially the physicians, in the main camp, and he became the main architect of the expansion of the prisoner hospital. He was also able to significantly increase his agency in the hospital by combining two camp positions: he was the senior physician (*Lagerälteste*), but he was also the senior block leader (*Blockälteste*), an administrative position with political implications.³⁰ Budziaszek found the use of personnel with no medical training, but performing treatments and even surgeries, unacceptable. He stated, "I could not tolerate the prevailing atmosphere and conditions. To begin to restore order to the hospital, I removed all the current prisoner functionaries and put prisoner doctors in their place."³¹

V. Expanding the Physical Plant

The original plan at the Buna-Monowitz camp for hospital care was for two barracks, (# 18 and #19), at one end of the camp, next to the camp perimeter. An additional quarantine barrack was set up to house typhus infected prisoners in February 1943. When the Buna-Monowitz camp was evacuated in January of 1945, the prisoner hospital consisted of nine barracks, differentiated by functions and approximating a normal hospital.

Table 1: ³²

Barrack #	Date of inception	Main function	Remarks
#18	Oct 42	Outpatient clinic Secretary; pharmacy Surgery; lab; physiotherapy	functions after 1943
#19	Oct 42	Ward for bed-ridden patients post-surgical ward Ward for " <i>Reichsdeutsche</i> "	functions after June 43
#20	Feb 43	Ward for infectious diseases, TB and skin diseases; <i>Durchfall</i>	
#15	June 43	Ward for internal diseases Dentist; Outpatient clinic	
#16	June 43	Surgical unit with sterile operating theater	
#17	Nov 43	Second internal medicine ward Laryngology	
#22	Jan 44	Ward for convalescent and weak the <i>Schonungsblock</i> patients	
#14	June 44	Operating theater II	
#13	Jan 45	a second <i>Schonungsblock</i>	

The description by Dr. Makowski's, a physician and prisoner, is supported by a drawing made by Dr. Czesław Jaworski and published in his memoir *Apel Skazanych*.³³ The expansion of this facility was permitted by the Nazi SS for its own purposes: not for the well being of prisoners, but for the maintenance of a reliable work force. However, the organization and outfitting of the barracks was the work of the prisoners of Buna-Monowitz themselves.

Once Budziaszek took over the prisoner hospital, new facilities were created such as the expansion of disinfection rooms and the addition of sinks and toilets in barracks # 20, #15 and #16. Previously patients had to relieve themselves in buckets. The surgical theater and a room for equipment sterilizations were outfitted. The new surgery had a fairly even cement floor, a washbasin with running water, and an adequate lamp over the surgical table. The post-surgical recovery room had single beds. These early improvements were followed by constant work on the rest of the facility. The workers who made these changes were all Buna-Monowitz prisoners and often the staff of the hospital itself who worked on the facility at night. A significant source for the building and rebuilding of the prisoner hospital were workers in the camp who were declared "sick" so that they could work on the hospital barracks.³⁴ Budziaszek describes the process:

We had to "organize" many building projects. When we had to build or rebuild something specific at the hospital barracks, the appropriate workers called in sick — for instance, carpenters, and the next time some other kind of workman — and in this fashion we got things done without official permission as well as without opposition from the SS. There really was no shortage of lumber for the barracks. If we needed bricks, we "organized" so that, let's say, 400 prisoners returned to the camp from some building site each carrying one brick. Naturally each brick had to be hidden under the worker's shirt. There was never a shortage of helpers. Each prisoner who did some work for the camp hospital received a portion of soup. This was possible because I had cooperating prisoners working in the kitchens who "organized" food for the hospital. Thanks to them we got more bread and margarine (more than the official rations). One must emphasize that this was not at the cost of other prisoners. We got extra direct from the warehouses but each *Blockälteste* also had to receive a designated amount of food. It is another matter that not all the *Blockälteste* distributed the food fairly. We got help from the kitchen also because the prisoners working in the kitchen were mostly Poles who didn't mind taking chances.³⁵

The term "organize" was an important element of life, of survival, in the camps. Prisoners created an under-life in which they procured food, medicines, new shoes, cigarettes, sex, and extra chances for survival. Not only individuals bartered, traded, manipulated and cruised the under-life in the Auschwitz camps but the entire enterprise of the prisoner hospital functioned within the under-life of the camp. Dębski, a prisoner in Flossenbürg, defines "organize" as "1. to steal; 2. to take away from the SS; 3. to take something not belonging to any prisoner."³⁶

Budziaszek described the process of acquiring medical supplies and surgical instruments for the prisoner hospital:

When the question was equipment — for instance, getting the necessary instru-

ments for the operating theater — it didn't happen along any official channels. We simply made do with what we could find. A significant source was the warehouses located in Birkenau holding the belongings of the victims of gassing.³⁷ Many of the physicians deported to KL Auschwitz carried their own instruments and pharmaceuticals with them. All of these were brought to the central pharmacy in KL Auschwitz. Since I had prisoner-colleagues there (such as Pharmacist Hommé), I equipped the Monowitz camp hospital with needed equipment and medicines ... going the official route produced medicines and equipment in minimal amounts, much less than what we actually needed.³⁸

One of the rare analysts of the strategies for prisoner survival, Terrence Des Pres, writes “prisoners working in factories performed daily acts of sabotage and theft. Those who worked in the notorious [SS] medical blocks stole medicines, jockeyed names, lied about symptoms, and in Buchenwald they used the typhus wards, which the SS would not go near, to hide men whose names had come up on the death lists.”³⁹

One of the more spectacular episodes of “organizing” was the theft of a boiler from the grounds of the I.G. Farben factory site. Budziaszek describes the incident:

A typical example of “organizing” was building washrooms and disinfection rooms next to the hospital barracks. We built these because we needed to provide the patients with the means to maintain elementary cleanliness. The camp distributed heating from a central location (*Fernheizung*), but because of poor insulation, little heat reached us, especially the hospital barracks, which were at the end of the heating system. With the loss of heat we could neither heat the barracks adequately nor disinfect clothing. With the quiet permission of the *Lagerführer* and a lot of help from SDG Neubert we “organized” a small boiler [lokomobile]. Neubert spotted it on the grounds of the factory. Moving this kettle proved little trouble. I sent 20 nurses to the factory grounds and, accompanied by Neubert, they moved the boiler to the camp. None of the guards — neither the ones at the I.G. Farben industrie gate nor the camp guards — even suspected that something illegal was happening in front of them. We placed the boiler behind the hospital barracks, so it wouldn't be glaringly obvious, and the appropriate workers joined the boiler to the internal heating system of the hospital. From that moment we were independent. The camp SS doctor was very satisfied with this and supposedly also the camp commander. We stressed the usefulness of this system, that we'd be able to disinfect all the camp clothing. The battle with the insects was fundamental in order to contain the epidemic.⁴⁰

The theft of the I.G. Farben boiler and its installation in the Buna-Monowitz HKB, the prisoner hospital, has become a famous story mentioned by many. Langbein, not an admirer of Budziaszek's, mentioned the noticeable improvements at the HKB, without mentioning Budziaszek by name, but related: “Even an old steam engine was (illegally) rolled from the IG plant into the camp and was used to heat and disinfect the infirmary. With its help the camp became ‘recognized as epidemic-free,’ as Felix Rausch proudly put it”⁴¹ Makowski provided the details:

Early in 1943 a group of some twenty prisoners employed in the HKB left the camp under the leadership of a political prisoner, a German — Georg Lay, escorted

by the SS-man Neubert ... The prisoners took a "lokomobile" [the boiler] and pulled it back to the camp about 1.5 km. When it was already in the camp, the factory managers realized that a piece of their equipment was missing. The SS-men answered they knew nothing about it.⁴²

Wagner makes the important point that the SS tolerated the theft of the boiler because they were truly interested in improving the Buna-Monowitz HKB. The pressure was on to provide more workers with less turn-over.⁴³ Dr. Jaworski also recounts this incident in his book on Auschwitz.⁴⁴

The initiative taken by the prisoner in the incident of the boiler theft led to a significant improvement in the prisoner hospital, the *Häftlingskrankenbau* (HKB). It demonstrates the agency prisoners were able to exert even within the context of a prison as deadly as Auschwitz.

VI. Staffing Prisoner Hospital (the HKB)

Budziaszek began recruiting medical personnel. The first two physicians to join the HKB were the Greek laryngologist Dr. Leon Cuenca and the German physician Dr. Franz Grossmann. Both were already in the Buna-Monowitz camp but were now transferred to medical work. Crucially, Budziaszek received permission to recruit from other units in the Auschwitz complex. In September 1943, the Polish physician Dr. Antoni Makowski joined the HKB. In October, the French physician Robert Waitz started working at the Buna-Monowitz prisoner hospital. The neurologist Dr. Zenon Drohocki was recruited from a transport from France in January 1944. The enormous influx of Hungarians in the early 1944 included the surgeon Miklos Lengyel. His wife, the physician Dr. Olga Lengyel, ended up in the hospital barracks of Birkenau, Auschwitz II. Other Hungarians were the optometrist Dr. Aladar Sternberg and the dermatologist Dr. Imre Holly.⁴⁵

A young chemist from Krakow, Mieczysław Zajac, was arrested and sent to Auschwitz in June 1943, tattooed with the number 126,825. He ended up in the tent "barracks" of the Buna-Monowitz camp. He remembered when he arrived at the camp that a young Polish physician, wearing a white coat and identified as the director of the hospital by his armband, called out: Are there any physicians here? Anyone with hospital skills? Finally Mieczysław Zajac identified himself as a chemist and Budziaszek found him a job with the dentist in the hospital.⁴⁶ Other physicians, including Drs. Lubicz, Orenstein, Grossman, and Hirsch, were recruited from Auschwitz sub-camps. The transports arriving at Auschwitz I and II were mined for possible medical workers. In this fashion some 82 physicians, dentists, pharmacists and X-ray technicians were identified in the 1944 transport lists. Many of them ended up in the Buna-Monowitz camp (see appendix).⁴⁷ As Jews from all over Europe arrived in Buna-Monowitz in 1943 and 1944, the camp became 90% Jewish. To staff the camp meant that Jews — such as Jewish doctors — were placed in positions of authority as functionary prisoners. Wagner reports that Buna-Monowitz was exceptional in this regard: only here was the SS forced to place Jews in position of authority to keep the camp functioning. There were not enough German or Polish prisoners available.⁴⁸

The hospital also needed men with nursing skills as well as cleaners, and cooks. The short-

age of trained nurses was acute and the solution was to take convalescent patients and train them in nursing duties. There were numerous work sites available in the hospital: men working with disinfectants, barbers, laundry men, but also cobblers, tailors, electricians and carpenters. The aim was to make the hospital self-sufficient since little or no help or supplies could be expected from the resources of the camp itself. The electricians were especially ingenious in providing decent lighting for the surgical theater and repairing equipment, especially the facilities for sterilizing surgical instruments.⁴⁹ Makowski reported that the hospital even commandeered an X-ray machine.⁵⁰ Budziaszek reported a more complicated scenario:

The camp hospital in Monowitz had its own workshops. We never managed to get official permission to employ craftsmen, so we recruited them by calling them nurses. They made various improvements and renovations. The prisoners even built some quite complicated apparatuses. I'm thinking specifically of an X-ray machine, the lack of which was particularly noticeable. We decided to build one ourselves. All the necessary technical elements were designed by the graduate engineer Kaplan,⁵¹ who was employed by Philips before the war as a radio station builder (and after the war became a director at Philips). Also involved in this project was a Polish electrician (whose name I can't recall) who died after the war.⁵² We "organized" the acquisition of appropriate electrical wiring on the grounds of the camp. All the equipment was assembled in the hospital barracks.⁵³ The one piece which we couldn't build ourselves was the lamp itself. But even this problem was solved. The lamp we needed was purchased by a civilian official with money we provided him. The camp organizers gathered this sum. We got this radiology unit operating towards the end of the camp's existence, in 1944.⁵⁴

Dr. Drohocki was particularly interested in electro-shock therapy for mentally ill prisoners. The prisoner electricians prepared such equipment. It is likely that Olga Lengyel's single journey from the Birkenau camp to Buna-Monowitz with a group of mentally ill women was in order to take advantage of Dr. Drohocki's expertise.⁵⁵ She had engineered her journey with the single intent to see her husband. They met in one of the surgical theaters. She mentioned: "We found ourselves in an operating room, in the midst of the bright metal instruments and an atmosphere saturated with ether and chloroform. There was no comparison between our miserable place in Birkenau and this well-equipped establishment."⁵⁶

VII. The patients of the Buna-Monowitz Prisoner Hospital

Among the most common reasons for illness were sickness carried by lice or fleas in the barracks, injuries from workplace accidents, catastrophic abscesses from ill fitting shoes, malnourishment. The inability to work in labor camps was a death sentence. The existence of a hospital facility in the Buna-Monowitz camp saved lives, but I.G. Farben placed constraints on the hospital. The historian of I. G. Farben, Joseph Borkin states that:

[I.G. Farben] enforced a rule that no more than five percent of the Monowitz inmates could be sick at any one time, a procrustean matching of beds and illness. The overage was disposed of by shipment to Birkenau. Even under the five percent rule, inmates confined to the hospital had to be returned to work within fourteen days. Those who failed the fourteen-day test were deemed unrecoverable.⁵⁷

And yet it proved possible to manipulate these regulations. Bernd Wagner noted that Budziaszek's strategy was to keep the hospital census as low as possible to limit selections, that is, transfer to Birkenau and death. As soon as the SS perceived the hospital as "crowded," the threat of selections loomed.⁵⁸ There were methods, desperate methods, to avoid the hospital selections. The easiest was to have oneself declared "healthy" and return to the camp; this was only possible if one had sufficient health to work. If a man was too weak to work in the factory, but he had some kind of connection in the HKB, he could get a clerk or a nursing position in the hospital. A seriously ill patient's disease could be misrepresented as less serious and the patient could be shuffled around the beds to hide him from the SS. If the SS knew that a serious illness was at hand, the HKB prisoner doctors could declare that this was an "interesting" case and should be pursued. Occasionally it was possible to argue that a doomed prisoner (destined to Birkenau to be killed) had some essential skill needed in Buna. Lastly one could try to bribe the eminently bribable SDG Neubert (a low-level SS functionary at the prisoner hospital) and be hidden from the SS-selection. Clearly each of these strategies required that the HKB personnel be invested in that prisoner's survival.⁵⁹ Langbein confirms that prisoner physicians in the main camp and Birkenau HKB also tried to protect patients from the lethal selection process.⁶⁰

Zajac also noted that while he was working as a nurse in the prisoner hospital in Buna-Monowitz that the official limit for a hospital stay was fourteen days, but the hospital stay could be extended if the patient was moved to a 'recovery ward' (*Schonungsblock*).⁶¹ The scientist and distinguished author Primo Levi was a patient at the Buna-Monowitz hospital. Levi, suffering from a foot infection, relates that "there are eight huts, exactly like the others in the camp, but separated by a wire fence. They permanently hold a tenth of the population of the camp, but there are few who stay there longer than two weeks and none more than two months: within these limits they are held to die or be cured."⁶² Levi is admitted to the *Schonungsblock*: "I am assigned bunk #10 — a miracle! It's empty! I stretch myself out with delight; it is the first time since I entered the camp that I have a bunk all to myself."⁶³

Robert Waitz, a prisoner physician in Buna-Monowitz, told Hermann Langbein:

Before selections [the physicians] concealed emaciated and ill inmates; they also forged medical records and hid unfortunate inmates who were destined for the gas chamber. This very necessary activity of the physicians repeatedly confronted them with a dilemma. Either do nothing, which would have been a solution dictated by cowardice, or act, which would have meant that they could help only a limited number of people and turned a physician into a judge. Only those could be helped who had chances of recovering physically and morally after receiving such help. Making a choice is one of the knottiest problems that a physician who is worthy of that title can face.⁶⁴

Langbein reports on a conversation he had with Budziaszek after the war. Budziaszek explained his dilemma:

Many inmates avoided going to the infirmary for as long as they could, even if they were sick, because they had heard about the selections. The SS camp leader no-

ticed one time that numerous inmates on the labor details could hardly stay on their feet and dragged along the paper bandages that had opened as they marched out of the camp ... and thus he ordered that those unfit for work be identified in all blocks. No one had any doubt about the fate that awaited these men.⁶⁵

Robert Jay Lifton, the historian of Nazi medicine in the camps, writes:

SS doctors needed the actual medical work of prisoner doctors, who in turn needed SS doctors to make that work possible — to keep others alive and stay alive themselves. What resulted were profound conflicts within prisoner doctors concerning their relationship to the Auschwitz ecology and to their SS masters as they (the prisoner doctors) struggled to remain free of selections and to retain a genuinely healing function.⁶⁶

One of the critical services that the prisoner hospital provided was the equivalent of an out-patient clinic, the “ambulatorium.” Prisoners were able to get treatment for injuries or illnesses without actually entering the hospital as an in-patient. The out-patient department was located in a section of Block #18.⁶⁷ Prisoners arrived with abrasions and wounds to their feet, infections, and injuries suffered in beatings. Various eczemas and skin problems were also treated here. The ambulatorium was staffed by men with some nursing training who worked from a central table equipped with medicines and bandages. Prisoners were treated as rapidly as possible so that they would only use their rest time for visits to the out-patient clinic. As the number of men appearing at the ambulatorium increased, physicians would also take shifts to treat the sick. Makowski spent much of his time in this service and he reports: “500 to 700 patients came to the ambulatorium daily and after June 1944, 1200 to 1300 daily. The increase can be explained by the arrival of new prisoners who were unaccustomed to camp life and came in large numbers with injured feet and digestive problems.”⁶⁸ The Italian physician Leonardo De Benedetti who arrived at Buna-Monowitz with Primo Levi in February 1944, sums up the most frequent diseases of prisoners: “1. dystrophic diseases, 2. diseases of the gastrointestinal apparatus, 3. diseases due to cold, 4. infective diseases, general and cutaneous, 5. conditions requiring surgery, 6. work-related conditions.”⁶⁹

While some conditions were addressed in the ambulatorium, the more severely ill or injured were admitted into the hospital for further treatment. Surgical cases were transferred to Auschwitz I before the expansion of the Buna-Monowitz facility in the spring of 1943. This newly constructed surgery at Buna-Monowitz allowed for sterile conditions. The first prisoner-surgeon was Dr. Franz Grossman who had Budziaszek acting as assistant. Budziaszek began working independently as a surgeon in the summer of 1944 when he was joined by the experienced Hungarian surgeon, Dr. Moritz Lengyel. The surgical cases were, at the outset, limited to bad bone breaks or appendectomies. In the summer of 1943 a sharp increase in industrial accidents (falls from scaffolding, crushing injuries) appeared at the hospital. Prisoners had some of the most dangerous jobs at the Buna Factory.

Eventually more complex cases were also treated, especially among the Hungarian Jews who suffered from stomach ulcers. With increased availability of anesthesia, Drs. Makowski,

Orenstein and Sperber were also active in the surgery. Makowski estimates that some 600 operations under sterile conditions were conducted in the Buna-Monowitz prisoner hospital of which only five or six patients died from complications.⁷⁰ Dr. Makowski ascribes this unexpectedly good outcome to the availability of wards for recuperation with single beds which had reasonably clean linen. Dr. De Benedetti confirms the types of surgeries: "We will simply report that even major surgery was regularly performed, mostly abdominal, such as partial gastrectomy and pyloroplasty for gastroduodenal ulcers, appendectomies, rib resections for empyema, etc., as well as orthopaedic interventions for fractures and dislocations."⁷¹ He adds that blood transfusions were readily available and also addresses one of the most notorious activities of SS physicians. "We have no reason to suppose — indeed, we believe that we can rule it out — that operations for the purpose of scientific research were performed in the Monowitz hospital, as they were on a vast scale in other concentration camps."⁷²

The most difficult patients to treat were ones suffering from various causes of diarrhea. The causes were difficult to diagnose since there were limited laboratory facilities available to establish which bacteria were responsible. However, the doctors understood that the likeliest and least treatable cause was the inadequate food provided for prisoners and the body's response to hunger and malnutrition. Treatment was difficult and these patients were the most likely to be chosen by the SS-doctors for transfer for "treatment" in Birkenau.

The severe lack of officially supplied medical materials meant that the doctors at the prisoner hospital once again relied on "organization." Budziaszek smuggled large suitcases of medication from the main camp to Buna-Monowitz with the help of prisoner-pharmacists in Auschwitz I. The "Canada" barrack produced needed sulfa drugs and syringes. Polish resistance fighters smuggled medicines into Buna-Monowitz at least three times using Buna factory go-betweens to contact Budziaszek. The laboratory at the hospital was also used to produce medications.⁷³ Physicians arriving at the camp also brought in accumulated medications and supplies.⁷⁴

Zajac, working as a nurse, relates that he had a teenaged patient with an acute streptococcus infection only curable with rarely available sulfides. Zajac traded one sweater and a pair of gloves for the medication, supplied by an SS worker in the main camp pharmacy.⁷⁵ Wagner states that:

The SS-men's attempt to isolate the camps from the outside world was not possible in Monowitz. Despite official prohibitions, workers found many possibilities for contact with civilian workers or POWs. In this way, partially with the tacit permission of the SS-men, they were able to bring bartered or stolen items to Monowitz, most of which ended up in the black market but many of which ended up in the HKB. The connection to various Polish resistance groups took place at the factory as well ... The daily interchange between the camp and the factory made it impossible for the SS-men to build an enclosed camp cosmos.⁷⁶

Primo Levi found a measure of peace and cleanliness in the prisoner hospital. Another man, fated for future fame as a witness to Auschwitz was Elie Wiesel. Like Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel arrived at Buna-Monowitz in the spring of 1944. He, too, had recourse to the hospital.

Toward the middle of January [1945], my right foot began to swell because of the cold. I was unable to put it on the ground. I went to have it examined. The doctor, a great Jewish doctor, a prisoner like ourselves, was quite definite: I must have an operation! If we waited, the toes — and perhaps the whole leg — would have to be amputated ... They put me into a bed with white sheets. I had forgotten that people slept in sheets. The hospital was not bad at all. We were given good bread and thicker soup. No more bell. No more roll call. No more work. Now and then I was able to send a bit bread to my father.⁷⁷

Elie Wiesel's doctor lanced an infection on the sole of the foot. This was only days before the evacuation of the entire Auschwitz complex as the Soviets approached the camp from the east.

Elie Wiesel began a nightmare journey west toward the Buchenwald camp deep into Germany. But Primo Levi, too sick to be moved when the camp was abandoned on the January 18th, 1945, was one of 800 men left in the prisoner hospital. Ten days later, the Soviet troops arrived. Levi and his Italian physician colleague, Dr. Leonardo De Benedetti, subsequently made a report to the Russian authorities. The report was published in Italian in 1946 but remained obscure until it was republished in Italy in 1993 and published in English translation in 2006. The prisoner developed and staffed prisoner hospital had the following facilities in 1945:

- outpatient clinic
- outpatient clinic for general surgery
- otorhinolaryngology and ophthalmology out-patient clinic
- dental surgery (in which fillings and the most basic prosthetic work were also carried out)
- ward for infective surgical cases
- general clinical ward, with sections for nervous and mental illnesses, equipped with a small electric shock therapy apparatus
- ward for infectious diseases and diarrhea
- recuperation ward — “Schonungs-Block” — to which were admitted dystrophic and oedematous patients and certain convalescents
- physiotherapy surgery, with a quartz lamp for ultraviolet radiation and lamps for infrared radiation
- chemical, bacteriological and serological research unit.⁷⁸

However, De Benedetti continues with a critique of the facilities as well. Naively, he complains that linens were not clean, that the outpatient facilities lacked a waiting room, that some wards lacked running water, and that the hospital staff lacked training. In a eulogy to De Benedetti, Primo Levi relates some of De Benedetti's experiences at the hospital:

After a few days on the construction site [at Buna] his shoes injured his feet, which swelled up, and he had to be admitted to the infirmary. Here there were frequent inspections by the SS doctors; they judged him to be incapable of working and put him on the list for death by gas, but fortunately his professional colleagues, the French or Polish prisoner-doctors of the infirmary, intervened: four times they managed to get his name crossed off.⁷⁹

VIII. Conclusion: Survival Strategies

The prisoners who survived were able to tell us about the experiences of living in these Nazi institutions. While Primo Levi, Leonardo De Benedetti, and Elie Wiesel experienced less than one year in the labor camp, other prisoners such as Hermann Langbein or Stefan Budziaszek survived for years. An analysis of long-term concentration camp prisoner survival shows that they developed strategies and behaviors that are familiar to sociologists who study “total institutions” which incarcerate inmates such as criminal prisoners, political prisoners or psychiatric patients. I want to examine seven factors which are important components for survival in this exceptionally harsh environment, but are nonetheless recognizable strategies for coping with any totally controlling regime. These factors are in a roughly chronological sequence beginning with a pre-camp experience and concluding with an adaptation to the camp.

1. Having previous experiences of regimentation to lessen the impact of camp routines
2. Finding a support system in the camp such as fellow nationals
3. Getting a defined job as a “functionary” [*Funktionshäftling*]
4. Maintaining contact with compatriots or family outside the prison
5. Defining the concentration camp experience as a war effort, a resistance movement
6. Speaking the critical languages in the camp [Polish and/or German]
7. Adjusting to the loss of one’s pre-war “self” and adapting to the normative roles of the prison culture.⁸⁰

The shock of entering into the insane environment of a concentration camp doomed many prisoners within months. Wagner’s claim that “those who could not absorb the rules of camp life in a couple of days, or at most weeks, ended up in Birkenau”⁸¹ is echoed by others such as Hermann Langbein. He stated, “It is a fact that most of the prisoners in the camp perished within the first three months after their arrival. The reason was that the devitalizing nature of the system hit an unprepared human being with enormous force and, as it were, crushed him intellectually, so that he was ready for impending death.”⁸² Long term survival was contingent on making it through this early period. Those prisoners who had some kind of experience in prisons or had served in some military capacity understood the quasi military model used to enforce discipline in Nazi concentration camps and had an edge on those who needed to rely solely on their physical strength or capricious luck.

While sheer chance played a role in any long term survival, prisoners who were able to connect to a support system within the camp had a better chance of survival. Men searched for political comrades, for shared languages or experiences, but significantly for those who were able to survive, they searched for some social network that brought solace in despair. These social connections were critical for finding a job in the camp, perhaps the strongest predictor for long term survival. Budziaszek’s medical training gave him a function within the camps. Primo Levi would also find protection from deadly physical labor as a chemist at Buna. “So it would seem that fate, by a new unsuspected path has arranged that we three, the object of envy of all the ten thousand condemned, suffer neither hunger nor cold this winter.

This means a strong probability of not falling seriously ill, of not being frozen, of overcoming the selections.”⁸³ Primo Levi arrived in Auschwitz with a group of fellow Italians of whom some 500 were immediately murdered upon arrival, but 96 men and 26 women were led off to work for the Reich.⁸⁴ Only 21 were still alive as winter approached.⁸⁵ Getting a job which provided protection was one of the critical elements for survival, but getting that job was also a function of having friends who helped. The arriving Italians were terrifically disadvantaged in this regard as in many other critical respects outlined below.

The postcards kept coming from the concentration camps. They contained two sentences: “I am healthy. I feel fine.” They had to be written in German so the censor could read them; they could only be addressed to the person listed for notification in case of death; and they were sent every second Sunday.⁸⁶ Essentially they were a way of proving to those at home that you were still alive. Dębski is critical of Hannah Arendt’s vision of the camps as creating a nearly absolute isolation from society.⁸⁷ Even the simple, if inaccurate, message “I am healthy. I feel fine” meant that the families had hope.

Letters coming to the prisoners served a different purpose. They proved to the prisoner that a world still existed outside the gates. Sala Garncarz Kirschner, whose collection of three hundred letters survived, kept every scrap that reached her in the camps. Her daughter related:

I learned that she had been imprisoned in seven different Nazi forced labor camps. And I learned that saving more than three hundred letters, postcards, and photographs and saving her life were inextricably linked. These were not just pieces of paper: they were proxies for the individuals she loved, friends and family who loved her. She hid them during line-ups, handed them to trusted friends, threw them under a building, even buried them under the ground. I began to understand her logic: the risks she undertook to preserve the letters were nothing compared to the danger she would face if she lost them, because they were her motivation to live.⁸⁸

Sala was part of the still not well understood Schmelt organization of Nazi labor camps in occupied Europe. Her situation was not as dire as that of those women and men in the concentration camps, but it expresses the importance of contact with the familiar outside world. Those prisoners who came from Slovakia or Greece, from Norway or Holland, from Romania or France did not have this important psychological resource.

Perhaps even more important than the precious letters were the food packages which Poles in the prisons and concentration camps received from their families. Not only did they add to the meager camp diet but they became a possible currency among the prisoners. Dębski reports that prisoners were allowed to get food packages at the end of 1942. “These packages were an important factor in saving lives of many prisoners”⁸⁹ There was yet another, far more direct way, of maintaining contact with the world outside the prison. Auschwitz’s role as a labor camp meant that prisoners were working outside of the prison itself. Long-time prisoner Kazimierz Jarzębowski (#115) maintained secret contacts with Poles living near the camp: he worked as a surveyor outside of the camp.⁹⁰ Stefan Budziaszek was able to see his mother and siblings from the window of the train wagon which transported him to work at Buna.⁹¹ More

remarkably, while he was running a clinic in the Jawischowitz labor camp (one of 46 Auschwitz subcamps), he was able to connive a meeting with his parents. He was also able to get medications from his father when he was head of the prisoner hospital in Monowitz.⁹² More mundanely, Dr. Jaworski reports that Budziaszek had cookies from home which he served at a staff dinner in the Auschwitz III-Monowitz prisoner hospital on Christmas Eve, 1944.⁹³

Tadeusz Dębski, a prisoner in the Flossenbürg concentration camp, was consistently disappointed in books he read about the concentration camp experience. "Every year some new books about concentration camps were published and I had read many of them. But every one of them had some fault — or, at least, so it seemed to me. One of those faults was especially significant: the lack of understanding of the complexity of camp life."⁹⁴ One of Dębski's "battlefields" is the tension between survivors and scholars. Who has the right to define the concentration camp experience? Why did the books he read never give an accurate, to him, view of camps? The core of his argument is that

[T]he Camps were an organizational tool, intended to serve many purposes. Had Hitler realized some of his terrifying dreams and killed all Jews in Germany and the conquered countries, the Camps would not have disappeared. They would have continued to contain the enemies of the Nazis, function as a new kind of school to teach the populations of the conquered countries obedience, and house a great reservoir of slave-workers who could be used everywhere according to the needs of the state.⁹⁵

For Polish prisoners the concentration camp provided a way of articulating their incarceration in patriotic terms. Riley states, "For those who define themselves as political prisoners ... the psychological suffering of a prison sentence may be somewhat mitigated. In rejecting the moral authority of the dominant society, the inmate can resist the unhappy self-defining implications of confinement and continue to assert identity claims that are consistent with self-respect."⁹⁶ Hermann Langbein, an Austrian Jew and an active socialist organizer, was constantly on the look-out for politically like-minded prisoners. His animus toward the reorganization of the prisoner hospital in Buna was motivated by the loss of protected work assignments and the ouster of friends. Another Auschwitz prisoner, Ella Lingers-Reiner, a Viennese physician, reports,

Those Poles who had been non-political before their arrest, were educated to political consciousness through their detention, through the camp, and through the guidance of the many active fighters of the Polish Resistance — those innumerable Polish political prisoners whose spirit and courage were to be broken in the camp but only grew in strength as long as they stood the strain physically.⁹⁷

Survival in Auschwitz was dependent on many variables and was always difficult, but long term prisoners who had the motivation to resist an enemy in the context of a war had a psychological edge that could make the difference between surrender to death and survival. Dębski expands the battlefield model to the conflict in the camp between the prisoners and the SS. "[The prisoners] refused to die and refused to change in the way wanted by their persecutors. They tried to stay alive in the Camps so they could return to their former life. They

tried to adapt old rules to the new environment. They often formed friendships and informal associations; a fighting group had a better chance to survive and to win its battle than a lone individual."⁹⁸ Long term survivors of Auschwitz won the battle of minds between the prisoner and the SS. Auschwitz was war. For many Eastern Europeans, surviving Auschwitz was patriotic resistance to Germans, a historic and known enemy.

Primo Levi arrived in Auschwitz III-Monowitz in February 1944 and his eloquent voice reveals the frightful disorientation produced by the communication barrier between the prisoners and the captors as well as among the prisoners themselves. He arrived with a group of Italians who need a translator to understand the SS-man who explained to them where they were. "The door is opened and an SS man enters, smoking. He looks at us slowly and asks, 'Wer kann Deutsch?'"⁹⁹ Not only do the Italian Jews not know German, they also do not know Yiddish. "The Germans call [the Italians] 'zwei linke Hände' (two left hands), and even the Polish Jews despise them as they do not speak Yiddish."¹⁰⁰ But the greatest barrier and a very dangerous one involves Polish: orders are shouted out in Polish. Primo Levi remembers the imperative "WSTAWAC!" the Polish word for "get up" as well as "stand up."¹⁰¹ The Polish Slavic language shares virtually no words with Italian or even German, but orders must be obeyed and obeyed quickly. Primo Levi was swimming in a linguistic sea of German, Polish, Yiddish, French, Greek — a disorienting and dangerous place. German SS-men and *Kapos* enforced their language lessons with batons and bullets.

By 1944 the camp language had had years of development. Dr. Jaworski noted the particular language of Auschwitz already in 1942. Since the management of the barracks was handled by common criminals (men wearing the green triangles), the talk was in German and extremely heavily laced with vulgarities.¹⁰² But since the language of the camp developed while the vast majority of the prisoners were Polish, Polish became the camp jargon. A patois developed of German root words with Polish case endings so that the German *Blockälteste* (senior prisoner in a barracks) became the *blokowy* or, feminine, *blokowa*.¹⁰³ This process reveals that long term prisoners in Auschwitz, mainly Poles, had privileged status, not, as Langbein confirms "because the SS granted it to them, but because in the early period Auschwitz had mostly Polish prisoners, which meant that they filled key positions in the prisoners' administration for which Germans were not suited because of their small number or their lack of intelligence. The Poles used every opportunity to help their compatriots obtain better positions."¹⁰⁴

Though speaking Polish meant that critical interactions in the barracks and the roll calls were more transparent, German was still the language necessary to gain access to a prisoner-functionary position, the *sine qua non* for survival. Hermann Langbein, a native German speaker, who survived Dachau, Auschwitz and Neuengamme was always able to find a job; physicians such as Jaworski and Stefan Budziaszek spoke enough German to negotiate their positions. Once Budziaszek got to the position of *Lagerälteste* of the prisoner hospital in Auschwitz III-Monowitz, he was able to shelter physicians by giving them jobs regardless of their linguistic abilities.

Adjusting to the loss of one's pre-war "self" and adapting to the roles and norms of the prison culture meant, among other factors, developing a new life within the camp system. The concentration camps appeared to be "total institutions" carefully constructed by the SS, however, the Nazis could not prevent prisoners from subverting these institutions. Holocaust scholar Terrence Des Pres noted:

On the surface, cooperation with camp administration appeared total. But underneath, moral sanity reasserted itself, response to necessity was characterized by resistance, and the worst effect of extremity was thereby transcended. In a literal sense, these countless, concrete acts of subterfuge constituted the 'underlife' of the death camps. By doing what had to be done (disobey) in the only way it could be done (collectively) survivors kept their social being, and therefore their essential humanity, intact.¹⁰⁵

The long term survivors negotiated a fearful set of obstacles and lived in a far more complex environment than is usually acknowledged. Understanding the nature of "total institutions," both historic and present day, will go a long way to understanding the survival of concentration camp prisoners.

IX. Who survived?

Who survived? Dr. Makowski's hospital records reveal that between July 1943 until June 1944, more than 15,000 prisoners were treated at the Monowitz prisoner hospital and 12,342 were released back into the camp, 766 died in the hospital, and 2599 prisoners were sent to other camps by the SS-physicians. On the basis of recovered camp records, in the full year of 1943, 4890 prisoners were transferred out of the hospital. For the whole year of 1944, this figure dropped to 2285.¹⁰⁶ The prisoner hospital, staffed by a motley crew of 47 prisoner physicians and 66 assorted nurses, cooks, and handymen created an environment which cut the transfer rate by more than half.¹⁰⁷ "Transfer" was a euphemism for almost certain death in the gas chambers of Birkenau.

One of the deadliest sites in the Nazi Third Reich, the complex of Auschwitz labor camps, became a marginally safer environment because of the concerted effort of organized long term prisoners. Terrence Des Pres, whose book *The Survivor* is exceptional in concentrating on long term prisoners, acknowledges that most prisoner testimony "stress the negative side of camp existence ... [aiming] above all to convey the otherness of the camps, their specific inhumanity."¹⁰⁸ Yet there were prisoners who were able to function within this cauldron of inhumanity and who lived on, day by day, coping with tremendous stress and forging some quotidian normality.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), p. 162.
- ² Franciszek Piper, "Die Rolle des Lagers Auschwitz bei der Verwirklichung der nationalsozialistischen Ausrottungspolitik" in *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, Ulrich Herbert, et al., editor (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2002), p. 409.
- ³ Piotr Setkiewicz, "Häftlingsarbeit im KZ Auschwitz III-Monowitz" in *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, Ulrich Herbert, et al., editor (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2002), p. 592.
- ⁴ Michael Than Allan, *The Business of Genocide: The SS, Slave Labor, and the Concentration Camps*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 2002), p. 150.
- ⁵ Quoted in Allen, p. 151.
- ⁶ Danuta Czech *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939-1945* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), p. 261. Czech's invaluable record of the daily reports from Auschwitz states: "Approximately 800 male prisoners are relocated out of the main camp to the newly built auxiliary camp near the construction site of the I.G. Farben works in the village of Monowitz (Monowice), which has been cleared of its inhabitants. I.G. Farben has had the auxiliary camp built, since no prisoners could be employed there from the end of August to the end of November, because Auschwitz was closed on account of the typhus epidemic. The auxiliary camp is called Buna and is under the control of Auschwitz C.C. In the early days, a few prisoners are still working on erecting additional barracks, building lavatories and latrines, and paving roads, while others are already building the Buna plant."
- ⁷ Antoni Makowski, *Organization, Entwicklung und Tätigkeit des Häftlingskrankenbau in Monowitz (KL Auschwitz III)* in *Hefte von Auschwitz* 15 (1975), p. 115.
- ⁸ Tadeusz Dębski, *A Battlefield of Ideas* (New York: Columbia University Press, East European Monographs, 2001), p. 175.
- ⁹ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 140.
- ¹⁰ Jan Sehn, *Concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, 1957), p. 53.
- ¹¹ Bernd Wagner, *IG Auschwitz: Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung von Häftlingen des Lagers Monowitz, 1941-1945*, (Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2000), p. 133.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100-101.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- ¹⁶ Hermann Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004, in association with the U.S. Holocaust Museum), p. 33.
- ¹⁷ Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*. 165.
- ¹⁸ Allen, *Business of Genocide*, p. 49.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188.
- ²¹ Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle*, p. 224.
- ²² Jeremy Dixon, *Commanders of Auschwitz*, (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 2005), 207.
- ²³ Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, p. 365-383.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 369.
- ²⁵ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 122.
- ²⁶ I received a copy of Budziaszek's oral testimony to the Oświęcim Museum after his death in 1994. He was interviewed by Tadeusz Iwaszko in February of 1974. Stefan Budziaszek was my father. After his 1955 marriage to Ursula Turner, he changed his surname to an amalgamation of Budziaszek and Turner: Buthner. The 70 page document has not yet been published. All translations from the Polish and German are my own.
- ²⁷ Budziaszek's number was tattooed on his forearm: #20,526. "February 10 [1942] 23 prisoners sent from Krakow by the Sipo and SD received Nos. 20524-20528...." (Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle*, p. 133).
- ²⁸ Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*, p. 195.
- ²⁹ Makowski, p. 122. (...ein Mensch von grosser Energie, Ambition und Organisationsfähigkeit.).
- ³⁰ *Idem.*, p.122.
- ³¹ Budziaszek (Buthner), unpublished transcript of oral testimony, 1974.
- ³² Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 119.
- ³³ Czesław Jaworski, *Apel Skazanych: Wspomnienia z Oświęcimia (Oświęcim, Brno, Monowice)*, (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1962).
- ³⁴ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 118.
- ³⁵ Budziaszek(Buthner), 1974.
- ³⁶ Dębski, *A battlefield of Ideas*, p. 264.
- ³⁷ Budziaszek is referring to the infamous site "Canada." This warehouse was used to sort the effects of murdered Jews and was located in Birkenau. It was the source not only for equipment for the hospital, but was also the source of

enormous amount of valuables which led to the SS corruption scandal and Höss's ouster in 1943. Workers in "Canada" also fed the well developed black market in the camp. "When employees of 'Canada'...stole warm clothing for their badly clothed comrades, that was not common theft; it was an act of social solidarity. The more one took from the Germans and sent into the barracks of the camp for the use of internees instead of letting it be dispatched in the Germany, the more one helped the cause. Thus the words, 'steal' and 'organize' were not at all synonymous." (Olga Lengyel, *Five Chimneys*, [London: Granada Publishing, 1981. First copyright, 1947] p. 106) Langbein states "Organizing," the name given to the appropriation of institutional property that had not yet been distributed, was part of the tradition of Nazi concentration camps." (Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, p. 133).

³⁸ Budziaszek (Buthner), 1974.

³⁹ Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor: An anatomy of life in the death camps*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 107.

⁴⁰ Budziaszek (Buthner), 1974.

⁴¹ Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, p.142.

⁴² Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 120.

⁴³ Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*, p. 126 footnote.

⁴⁴ Jaworski, *Apel Skazanych*, p. 258.

⁴⁵ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 123.

⁴⁶ Mieczysław Zajac, *Powrót Niepożądany*, (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Literackie) p. 143. The title of this memoir is a translation of the German phrase *Rückkehr unerwünscht*, i.e., "no return desired" — a death sentence like the more famous *Nacht und Nebel*, lost in the night and the fog.

⁴⁷ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 124.

⁴⁸ Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*, p. 123.

⁴⁹ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 125.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁵¹ He is identified by Makowski (*Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 126) as Serge Kaplan, an employee of Philips in Holland.

⁵² Makowski (*Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 126) identifies him as Sliwiński.

⁵³ Makowski reports: "All building and in installation work was carried out by prisoners — sometimes, too, the functional prisoners of the HKB, often skilled workers who worked evenings after return from work, but more often specialists who were taken up illegally as patients. The materials for the construction (roof tiles, wood, cement, wash basins, lavatories, pipes, etc.) were fetched by trucks from the factory grounds having been placed inside the empty mid-day lunch soup kettles. Clearly many prisoners had to be involved in this activity. The camp administrators had to aware of this since it would have been impossible to build so much without their knowledge." (Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 120).

⁵⁴ Budziaszek (Buthner), 1974.

⁵⁵ Olga Lengyel, *Five Chimneys: a Woman Survivors True Story of Auschwitz* (London: Granada Publishing, 1981. First copyright, 1947), p. 200.

⁵⁶ *Idem.*, p. 200.

⁵⁷ Joseph Borkin, "The Crime of I.G. Farben: slave labor and mass murder in Nazi Germany" in Eric Katz, ed., *Death by Design: Science, Technology, and Engineering in Nazi Germany*, (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2006), p. 283.

⁵⁸ Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*, p. 170.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188-89.

⁶⁰ Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, p. 210.

⁶¹ Mieczysław Zajac, *Powrót Niepożądany*, (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, date unknown), p. 153.

⁶² Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, Touchtone edition, 1996), p. 46.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁶⁴ Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, p. 212.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁶⁶ Robert Jay Lifton, "The Nazi Doctors" in Eric Katz, ed., *Death by Design*, p. 231.

⁶⁷ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 150. The physicians working in the ambulatorium were Prof. Bertold Epstein (from Prague), Dr. Jonas Silber (from France), Dr. Szymon Lubicz, Prof. Robert Waitz, Prof. Michel Kindberg, Dr. Bronisław Rutkowski, Dr. Moritz Lengyel, Dr. Leo Cuenca, and Dr. Aladar Sternberg (who could fashion fresh eye glasses from glasses collected in the camp.)

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁶⁹ Primo Levi with Leonardo De Benedetti, *Auschwitz Report* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 47. [First published as 'Rapporto sull'organizzazione igienico-sanitaria del campo di concentramento per ebrei di Monowitz (Auschwitz-Alta Silesia)' by *Minerva Medica*, 1946.]

⁷⁰ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 155.

⁷¹ Levi with De Benedetti, p. 55-56.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

- ⁷³ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 148.
- ⁷⁴ Jaworski, *Apel Skazanych*, p. 256.
- ⁷⁵ Zając, *Powrót Niepożądany*, p. 188.
- ⁷⁶ Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*, p. 205.
- ⁷⁷ Elie Wiesel, *Night*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 74.
- ⁷⁸ Levi with De Bededetti, p. 63.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- ⁸⁰ Ewa Bacon, "Strategies for long-term survival in Auschwitz" in *Emerging Issues in Holocaust Education* (Seton Hill University Conference Proceedings, 2009), p. 49-55.
- ⁸¹ Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*, p. 137.
- ⁸² Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, p. 57.
- ⁸³ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, p. 140.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- ⁸⁶ Jaworski, *Apel Skazanych*, p. 85.
- ⁸⁷ Dębski, *A Battlefield of Ideas*, p. 28-29: "She repeats her statements in even stronger terms: 'The real horror of the concentration and extermination camps lies in the fact that the inmates, even if they happen to keep alive, are more effectively cut off from the world of the living than if they died, because terror enforces oblivion.'"
- ⁸⁸ Ann Kirschner *Letters to Sala: A young woman's life in Nazi labor camps*, (NY: The New York Public Library, 2006), p. 9.
- ⁸⁹ Dębski *A Battlefield of Ideas*, P. 146. Dębski continues that the food packages served a three fold function: the food was high in calories, it served to bribe functionaries and food recipients got better treatment since they were the source of future bribes, and food could be shared with friends. "...a large number of prisoners hanging between life and death could survive thanks to the extra amount of food they received, even if it was not large (p. 147)." Dębski was in the concentration camp system from 1941 to 1945.
- ⁹⁰ Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle*, p. 401
- ⁹¹ Budziaszek (Buthner), 1974.
- ⁹² *Ibid.*
- ⁹³ Jaworski, *Apel Skazanych*, p. 268.
- ⁹⁴ Dębski, *A Battlefield of Ideas*, foreword.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.
- ⁹⁶ John Riley, "The pains of imprisonment: Exploring a classic text with contemporary authors," *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, Fall, 2002, vol.13, 443-463.
- ⁹⁷ Quoted in Dębski, p. 207.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- ⁹⁹ Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, p. 22. "Who here knows German?"
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- ¹⁰² Jaworski, *Apel Skazanych*, p. 54.
- ¹⁰³ Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, p. 14.
- ¹⁰⁴ Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, p. 14.
- ¹⁰⁵ Des Pres, *The Survivor*, p. 108.
- ¹⁰⁶ Makowski, *Häftlingskrankenbau*, p. 180-181.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 177-179.
- ¹⁰⁸ Des Pres, *The Survivor*, p. 99.

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APPENDIX

Register of physicians (in different time periods) active in the Prisoner Hospital in Monowitz (page 177 and 178 in Antoni Makowski's *Häftlingskrankenbau in Monowitz*)

NAME	CAMP #	POSITION
1. Budziaszek, Stefan	20526	HKB eldest prisoner
2. Cremieux, Albert		physician
3. Cuenca, Leo	110941	physician
4. Drohocki, Zenon	169779	physician and barracks eldest
5. Eitingier		physician
6. Epstein, Berthold	79104	physician
7. Fischer, Bela		physician
8. Grossmann, Franz	107566	physician
9. Garfunkel, Israel	157057	physician
10. Happ, Hans	81314	dentist
11. Hermann, Willi	89075	dentist
12. Hirsch		physician
13. Hofstein, Jules	172702	physician
14. Holly, Imre	A 8107	physician
15. Jaworski, Czesław W.	31070	physician

16. Kaufmann		physician
17. Keketi, Eugen	A 8234	physician
18. Kindberg, Leon Michel	172729	physician
19. Kletz, Gaston	157101	physician
20. Kovac, Georg		physician
21. Lengyel, Moritz	A 8371	physician
22. Levy, Camille	167585	physician
23. Lubicz, Szymon	65686	physician
24. Makowski, Antoni	131791	physician and barracks eldest
25. Mohl, Herbert	71182	physician
26. Ornstein, Hugo	43722	physician
27. Pejsa, Vaclac		physician
28. Rutkowski, Bronisław	79281	physician
29. Salpeter		physician
30. Samuel, Max	104868	physician
31. Samuelidis, Salomon	121104	physician
32. Schönzweig		physician
33. Schweikert, Rudolf	62890	dentist
34. Silber, Jonas	38968	physician
35. Spazierer		physician
36. Sperber, Karel	85512	physician
37. Stern, Andre		physician
38. Stern, Imre		physician
39. Sternberg, Aladar	A 8611	physician
40. Szczedryn, Aleksiej	RKG 11091	physician
41. Śliwiński, Tadeusz	68939	
42. Ullman		dentist
43. Waitz, Robert	157261	physician
44. Weisskopf, Rudolf	71261	physician
45. Weiner		physician
46. Wellers, Georges		chemist
47. Winter, Alfred	65342	physician

Monowitz: Helpers and administrators

1. Barczyk, Ryszard	101541	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
2. Braunsberg, Anton		barber
3. Czyłok, Józef	114840	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
4. Eisler, Eric		nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
5. Elias, Julian		nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)

6. Feldbau, Jacques	157026	clerk
7. Fogel, Froim	69723	disinfector
8. Frenkiel, Israel	68440	barber
9. Halbreich, Zygmunt	68233	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>) and barracks eldest
10. Hanak		camp administrator for food service
11. Hauser, Kei	70289	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
12. Hess, Ludwig	68486	night guard
13. Heymann, Stephan	68488	main clerk
14. Hahn, Heinz		nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
15. Chirschtritt, Nathan	70291	camp administrator for food service
16. Kanarak		
17. Kaplan, Serge	139776	electrician
18. Kapler, Mieczysław	68506	surgical nurse
19. Klimek, Franz	60354	barracks eldest
20. Kmiecinski, Franciszek	126246	disinfector
21. Kosmider, Tadeusz	624	barracks eldest
22. Kowalski, Jerzy	135668	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
23. Kozdass, Otto	71344	barracks eldest
24. Kujawa, Ryszard	135678	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
25. Kwaśny, Gustaw	114844	senior disinfector
26. Lay, Georg	71349	barracks eldest and senior disinfector
27. Leonhard, Hermann	152256	barracks eldest
28. Lindenbaum, Abraham		nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
29. Linhard, Karl	112117	barracks eldest
30. Lippman, Heinz	87467	barracks eldest
31. Lippman, Rudolf		clerk
32. Littwitz, Kurt	116968	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
33. Luger, Joseph	60357	barracks eldest
34. Magiera, Szczepan	122988	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
35. Maneli, Mieczysław		nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
36. Matheu, Karl		disinfector
37. Markowitsch, Erich	70110	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>) and barracks eldest
38. Minc, Karel	68582	camp administrator for food service
39. Mucha, Roman	122804	dentist assistant
40. Munk, Honsa	71170	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
41. Nakache, Alfred		masseuse
42. Niedojadło, Eugeniusz	213	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>) and barracks eldest
43. Nowakowski, Edward	131730	locksmith
44. Pośpieszyński, Mieczysław	169710	disinfector

45. Poznański, Artur	104691	clerk
46. Rausch, Felix	68628	clerk
47. Rączka, Eugeniusz	127647	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
48. Rudziński, Tadeusz	124977	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
49. Schuller, Otto	91143	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
50. Schulmann, Hirsch	142533	disinfector
51. Schuster, Heinrich		HKB eldest
52. Schwarz, Hermann	71224	disinfector
53. Stasik, Tadeusz	5870	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
54. Sylman, Leon	68677	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
55. Szachowski, Witold		nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
56. Śliwiński		electrician
57. Tadlewski, Albert	157246	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
58. Tannenwurz, Chaim	114163	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
59. Treister, Noach	68710	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
60. Vesely, Karel		nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
61. Wassermann, Leopold	114865	disinfector
62. Wohl, Tibor	71255	disinfector
63. Wolf, Paul	71413	barracks eldest
64. Wörl, Ludwig	60363	HKB eldest
65. Wyszatycki, Władysław	124975	nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)
66. Zając, Mieczysław		nurse (<i>Pfleger</i>)

SECTION 5
REMEMBERING
THE VOICES OF WOMEN

EDITH STEIN

THE NATURE AND VOCATION OF WOMEN

■
BY LAURA L. GARCIA

Few women philosophers of the 20th century have exercised as great an influence as Edith Stein. Her writings and key ideas play a prominent role in the thought of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II¹ and that of his successor, Pope Benedict XVI. Here I will focus on Stein's role in the Catholic Women's Movement in Germany, and on the experiences and influences that shaped her views on the nature and vocation of women.

Her lectures and radio addresses in the late 1920s and early 30s aimed to articulate an adequate theory of human persons and a philosophically-informed view of women's distinctiveness. The qualities and attitudes characteristic of women would then offer an outline of the vocation of women in society. In what follows, Section I offers a brief overview of Edith Stein's adult life, which leads, in Section II, into a discussion of her theory of human nature, with special attention to her emphasis on the unique core or essence of each person. Section III explores Stein's understanding of the feminine difference, and Section IV presents three role models she put forward as examples of authentic women. By way of conclusion, I propose a fourth member to be added to that group.

I. Life and Education

Edith Stein is one of those people whose entire life seems to be a sign. She was born on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, in 1891 in Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław, Poland), the youngest of eleven children in a devout Jewish family. When she was not yet two years old her father died suddenly, leaving Edith's mother to raise seven children (four died in childhood) and to manage the family lumber business. Brought up listening to the *Psalms* and *Proverbs*, Stein considered her mother a living example of the strong woman of *Proverbs 31* who rises early to care for her family and sell her wares in the marketplace.

By her teenage years, Stein no longer practiced her Jewish faith and considered herself an atheist, but she continued to admire her mother's attitude of total openness toward God. In high school and college she became active in the feminist movement, joining both the Women's Student Union and the Pedagogical Society for Women's Right to Vote. One of her letters of her spirited conversations with others in the student union is about the proper balance between career and motherhood. Stein was alone in contending that it is possible to combine the two.²

Philosopher and Feminist

Like many before and since, Edith Stein came to Christianity through the study of philosophy. One of the first women to be admitted to university studies in Germany in 1910, she transferred from the University of Breslau to the University of Göttingen in 1913 in order to study

with Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. Stein's philosophical studies encouraged openness to the possibility of transcendent realities, and her atheism began to crumble under the influence of her friends who had converted to Christianity.

When Stein arrived at Göttingen, she was twenty-one years old and filled with expectation for lively intellectual exchanges with the others who had come to study with Husserl. Among them were Adolf Reinach, Roman Ingarden, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, and Dietrich von Hildebrand. She also enjoyed conversations with those who were already well-established members of the Göttingen circle, and especially with Max Scheler. Stein's friendship with Conrad-Martius, one of the few female members of the group, made a profound impression on her. Both Conrad-Martius (a devout Lutheran) and Reinach (a convert to Catholicism) shared Stein's passion for seeking truth. They were inspired by the rallying cry of the early phenomenological movement: "Back to the things themselves."

Unfortunately, World War I broke out in 1914, putting everyone's educational plans on hold. Stein returned to Breslau for medical training. Upon completion of her training she volunteered with the Red Cross and offered to go wherever she was most needed. While awaiting assignment, she returned to Göttingen to complete her exams with highest honors and begin work on her dissertation, entitled *On the Problem of Empathy*.³ In 1915, the Red Cross sent Stein to a hospital for contagious diseases where she worked for six months. She later received a medal of valor for her courageous service there.

In the fall of 1915, Stein was free to return to her studies. Husserl had been offered a professorship at the University of Freiburg and, along with others in the phenomenology group, Stein followed him there. She continued work on her dissertation, which offered a careful analysis of the nature of empathy, distinguishing it from such related attitudes as sympathy, pity, and compassion. She employed the phenomenological method she had learned from Husserl, one that promised to overcome the current skepticism, relativism, and scientific positivism that dominated philosophy in the early 20th century. (This method is described in greater detail below.)

Stein received her doctorate *summa cum laude* in 1917, an honor that was already rare, and even more so for a woman. She remained in Freiburg for another year, working as Husserl's assistant and editing some of his papers while completing two books of her own, one on philosophy of psychology and the other on the nature of the state as a community of persons.

With the enthusiastic support of Husserl, Stein, submitting her two books and several journal articles as her habilitation thesis, applied for a university position at Göttingen. A major work of this kind was required for appointment as university lecturer — a junior position roughly equivalent to the rank of assistant professor in the United States, but requiring a much more impressive record of publications and teaching, analogous to what would be required for tenure in the American system. A lectureship, sometimes called an habilitation, was generally a prelude to full professorship, the highest academic rank for scholars, corresponding to that of full professor in the United States.⁴

Stein's application was denied, primarily on the grounds that university positions were not open to women, though it is likely that an underlying current of anti-Semitism also played a role. In protest of this decision, Stein wrote a letter to the Prussian Ministry for Science, Art, and Education.⁵ At her request, Husserl also wrote to the Ministry, but "he closed his letter with the half-sarcastic remark, 'If academic careers should ever be opened up for women, I would warmly recommend Stein for Habilitation.'"⁶ A year later, on February 21, 1921, Minister Becker issued a statement that gender should not be used as an obstacle to habilitation.⁷ In spite of this concession from Berlin, it was thirty years before a woman was appointed to a university position in Germany.

Stein left Freiburg in 1918 and moved back to her mother's home in Breslau to begin a career as an independent philosopher. This move was motivated in part by her disappointment over Husserl's apparent abandonment of his earlier realism — the claim that we can know about the features of real things by careful attention to our experience of them. In Breslau, she began work on a major philosophical analysis of the nature of being, entitled *Potency and Act*.⁸

In Freiburg, Stein had also begun a spiritual journey. One of their circle, Adolf Reinach, lost his life in the Great War, and Stein spent a few days with his wife Anna helping to arrange her things. She was moved by Anna's deep peacefulness, even in the midst of sorrow. Many others in the Husserl circle were also Christians. Several were converts to Catholicism, and Edith's dear friend Hedwig Conrad-Martius was Lutheran. By 1920, she was considering converting to Christianity but had not been able to decide between the Lutheranism of Conrad-Martius and the Catholicism of Anna Reinach. These were difficult months for her mother, who was aware of Edith's growing interest in Christianity.

During the summer of 1921, Stein was vacationing at the home of Conrad-Martius, and found herself alone in the house one evening. Seemingly by chance, she picked up a copy of the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila, founder of the Carmelite Order. She stayed up all night to finish it, and by morning had decided, "This is the truth." She went out that very day to buy a Catholic missal and a copy of the Catechism, and she was baptized the following January. Stein hoped to enter the Carmelite Order immediately afterward, but her spiritual advisers felt that entrance into cloistered life just after her conversion would lay too heavy a burden on her mother's heart. Perhaps a bit of prudence entered in as well, since the initial enthusiasm of a convert does not always find its true direction.

Since a university post had been denied her, Stein accepted a teaching position at a women's teacher-training college — St. Magdalena in Speyer, Germany — run by the Dominican sisters. She taught Latin, Greek, and German History, and raised a few eyebrows by discussing contemporary political events and social issues in her classes. Stein's experience of teaching young women informed several of her later lectures on the education appropriate for women. It became increasingly obvious to her that a course of studies designed to prepare women for domestic work and motherhood was operating on outdated assumptions about women's actual social roles and natural capacities. These teaching years also provided the occasion for adding

the nature of feminine and masculine souls to her theory of finite, human persons.

After five years at St. Magdalena's, Stein began speaking to educators about creating an instructional program better suited to the formation of college-aged women, one that would allow teachers to adapt the curriculum to individual students, since each is essentially different from every other. This approach coincided with Stein's philosophy of the person, in which she emphasizes both the distinctiveness of women and the necessity of providing formation to the whole person. Many of her lectures begin with a description of the nature and vocation of women, as this lays the groundwork for her argument in favor of a full liberal arts education for women, one that speaks to women *as women* and addresses not only the mind, but also bodily health, imagination, emotions, attitudes, and choices.

Leader in the Cause of Women

At the end of the 19th century, an international Women's League was formed through a union of various groups devoted to the rights and dignity of women, especially the right to vote. It gained new momentum in 1919 when women were given the same rights as men, including the right to vote and hold political office. However, thousands of women had lost husbands and fathers in the Great War, many had been thrust into typically masculine jobs during the war and now found themselves surrounded by and competing with men, and almost all were poorly prepared for their newly-acquired roles and responsibilities. Having achieved its primary objective, the international Women's League began to divide into smaller groups by country or faith community.

In a detailed essay on "Problems of Women's Education," Stein notes that "a Catholic Women's Movement began several decades after the interdenominational [women's] movement; it was organized as the *Catholic Women's League* and the *Association of Catholic Women Teachers*." This movement is not merely a version of the first, however, but "must rest on its own foundation, the foundation of faith and a Catholic world-view which is well thought out in all its consequences."⁹ The Catholic Women's League of Germany adopted a two-pronged mission: (1) providing social services for women who needed a safe place to stay, help with living expenses, child care, job training, and venues for marketing homemade products, and (2) educating women for exercising their newly-acquired rights to vote, hold political office, form labor unions, gain admittance to universities, and enter the professions. The League looked to Edith Stein and other leading women Catholics in Germany to articulate the principles of the movement and determine which practical initiatives were consistent with this mission.

The German Catholic Women's League published its own magazine, offered public lectures, seminars, and conferences, and raised funds for the building of countless schools, group homes, and training centers. Instead of looking to the government or established foundations for funding or for blueprints on how to proceed, the Women's League simply saw what needed to be done, solicited funds (largely from women donors), and made it happen. These remarkable women tackled nearly every social problem that they encountered in the chaos of the 1920s in Germany. They appointed committees on temperance, labor laws, national morality

— even “the Land,” to work on the exodus from farms and rural communities to the already overcrowded urban centers.¹⁰ The very scope of their activities testifies to their view of women’s place in the world — in effect, everywhere.

Stein thought it important, however, to distinguish the guiding principles of the Catholic Women’s League from those of the secular feminism of the previous decades. In a 1928 address to the Bavarian Catholic Women Teachers association entitled “The Significance of Woman’s Intrinsic Value in National Life,” she begins with the observation that “even twenty years ago, it would have scarcely occurred to anyone to pose such a question [concerning women in national life]. The big slogan in the beginning of the feminist movement was *Emancipation*. ... Women’s personal capabilities and powers, often dwarfed without [equal] opportunities for action, were to be liberated. Hence, the goal was one of *individualism*.”¹¹

Since women were given the same rights as men some years ago, Stein claims it is no longer necessary to deny the obvious differences between men and women. “So the contemporary situation,” she says, “is characterized primarily by the feminine singularity being accepted as self-evident.”¹² The next goal should be to spell out the distinctive qualities or perspectives women bring to the public square. She believes that liberation (from a legal standpoint) was an important step for women, but it is not enough.

Stein also observes that the individualism of earlier feminism had given way to a more communal understanding of the good. This shift makes it important to consider, not only how individual women can find fulfillment, but also how women can contribute to the welfare of the community. Stein would be the first to acknowledge the importance of developing one’s personal vocation, but that vocation includes the universal call to human beings to reach outside themselves in the interest of other persons and the common good. She warns that those who seek personal fulfillment by focusing on themselves will never find it. Human beings only find real joy and peace through free and generous service to others.

Carmelite and Martyr

In 1931, Stein resigned her post at St. Magdalena in order to devote more time to her philosophical research, returning once again to the manuscript on *Potency and Act*. Since her conversion, her work on the nature of being became an attempt to bring together the phenomenological analysis of her training with the Aristotelian approach of St. Thomas Aquinas, whose thought has served as the touchstone for Catholic philosophy and theology. One of Husserl’s disciples, Martin Heidegger, had succeeded Husserl as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Freiburg in 1928, and Stein hoped he would support her application for a position in the philosophy department. Her application was denied, however, ostensibly because of economic conditions (which, to be fair, were abysmal). Still, there is no doubt that sexism and anti-Semitism played at least as large a role in the university’s decision. In fact, Heidegger himself was elected rector of the University less than a year later, and he, expressing support for Adolf Hitler and the Nazi cause in his inaugural speech as rector, joined the National Socialist German Workers’ (Nazi) Party in May 1933. Stein’s application to the

University of Breslau met with the same fate. However, her lectures and radio addresses had brought her to the attention of the academic world, and in the summer of 1932 she was finally offered a university position at the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Münster.

In addition to managing a heavy teaching load, Stein turned again to her work in the philosophy of education. She was in the process of planning a conference with colleagues in related disciplines to collaborate in this effort when her work was interrupted by the election of the Hitler's Nazi Party in January 1933. The Nazis immediately passed a series of anti-Jewish laws, forbidding non-Aryans to teach at state institutions, give public lectures, or publish their work. In April, Stein resigned her post at the German Institute rather than wait to be dismissed.

Even in these early months of the regime, Hitler's militant atheism and contempt for human rights, especially those of Jews, was crystal clear. Given Stein's stature as a Catholic intellectual, she felt she should seek an audience with Pope Pius XI in hopes of persuading him to issue an encyclical condemning the anti-religious views and human rights atrocities of the National Socialist Party. However, since 1933 was a Holy Year, the 1900th anniversary of Christ's death, Rome was flooded with pilgrims and dignitaries, and a private audience with the Pope was deemed impossible.

Not to be denied, Stein then wrote a lengthy letter to the Pope, detailing the tenets of Nazi ideology and predicting dire consequences for Christians and Jews alike if that ideology were allowed to grow unchecked. In return, she received only a polite form letter. Many scholars believe that her carefully-crafted letter (almost an encyclical in itself) must never have reached the eyes of the Pope. In any event, the Vatican hoped, in these first months of the new German regime, to negotiate a concordat that would allow the Church to operate independently and continue to meet the needs of the faithful and the many others who benefitted from its charitable activities.

It did not take long, of course, for Hitler's malevolent intentions to become painfully obvious to the entire world. Hence, in 1937, Pope Pius XI issued the now-famous encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* (*With Burning Sorrow*), admitting that "the experiences of these last years have fixed responsibilities and laid bare intrigues, which from the outset only aimed at a war of extermination."¹³ This pastoral document was read in every German parish on Passion Sunday that year, and the Nazis spent the next several weeks trying to find and burn every copy in existence. Priests and laity alike copied it surreptitiously or by hand, and continued to distribute it to the faithful.

By way of response, Hitler wrote: "I shall open such a campaign against them [the Catholic clergy] in press, radio and cinema so that they won't know what hit them. ... Let us have no martyrs among the Catholic priests, it is more practical to show they are criminals."¹⁴ The Gestapo began a practice of arresting men in religious life, especially those in cloistered monasteries, and accusing them of homosexuality — a crime punishable by death.

In the spring of 1933, just after Hitler's rise to power, Stein's colleagues at the German Institute realized they had no way to protect her from arrest and imprisonment, so they

offered her a position at an affiliated institution in South America. Of course, taking that position would mean that Edith's mother, now 84, would never see her again. On the other hand, her philosophical career in Germany was over; she could no longer teach, publish, or lecture in public. She wrote: "I do not believe ... in any return to the Institute, nor for that matter, in any possibility of a teaching career in Germany. ... Don't worry about me. The Lord knows what he has in mind for me."¹⁵ In the absence of career prospects, Stein decided that the time had come to fulfill her long-standing desire to enter religious life.

While on a trip with a friend during Holy Week in April of that year, Edith stopped in Cologne at the Carmelite convent during the service for Holy Thursday. By her own account, the homily moved her very deeply. She wrote:

I spoke with the Savior to tell him that I realized it was his Cross that was now being laid upon the Jewish people, that the few who understood this had the responsibility of carrying it in the name of all, and that I myself was willing to do this, if he would only show me how. I left the service with the inner conviction that I had been heard, but uncertain as ever as to what "carrying the cross" would mean for me.¹⁶

Nun and Martyr

On October 15, 1933, just before her forty-second birthday, Edith Stein entered the Carmel of Cologne, taking the name Teresa Benedicta a Cruce — Teresa, Blessed of the Cross. Though she had expected to leave her academic work behind on entering religious life, both her mother superior and spiritual director insisted that she should finish the manuscript she had begun when seeking appointment as a university professor. So Stein returned to her work on being, giving it the new title *Finite and Eternal Being*, continuing to seek a fruitful synthesis of phenomenology and Thomism, hoping to bring them into a harmony that would enhance the power of both theories.

Stein revised the manuscript considerably throughout 1934, and the Cologne Carmel paid to have it typed and prepared for printing. Given the laws forbidding Jews to publish, however, the printer suggested that it be published under the name of one of Edith's married sisters. Both Edith and her sister adamantly refused. An inquiry to the State University of New York in Buffalo asking whether they would be willing to publish the book was unsuccessful, perhaps due to the lack of a translator. Sadly, *Finite and Eternal Being* was not published until 1950, eight years after Stein's death.

Sister Teresa Benedicta remained in the Carmel of Cologne for five years, participating in the life of the community with great joy. After her mother's death in 1936, Stein's sister Rosa was also baptized as a Catholic and entered the lay branch of Edith's religious community as a Third Order Carmelite. After the terror of *Kristallnacht* on November 9, 1938, however, the nuns in Cologne feared for Sister Teresa's safety and decided to send her secretly to the Carmel of Echt in the Netherlands. Rosa joined her there as well and served as the convent portress. Holland's fall to the Nazis in 1940 placed Edith and Rosa once again in grave danger. Plans were made to move them to Switzerland, but the convent there had room only for Edith and

she refused to go without her sister.

The Nazi regime systematically applied their program of “race purification” almost immediately. Within a few months, religious authorities in the Netherlands began to petition the government to abandon its recent policy of mass deportation of Jews, who were being sent to Germany. Frustrated with the lack of response from the authorities, the Bishop of Utrecht distributed a pastoral letter to be read in all Catholic parishes of Holland on Sunday, July 26, 1942. The letter condemned the offenses against divine justice and mercy perpetrated by the Nazi regime, but also called Catholics to a deep examination of conscience about the role they may have played in allowing the present calamities. The letter asked Catholics, “Have we always fulfilled the demands of justice and charity toward our fellowmen?”¹⁷

The Gestapo retaliated by rounding up all Roman Catholic Jews and sending them to the death camps. The following Sunday, August 2, 1942, Edith and Rosa Stein were arrested at the Carmel of Echt. As they were being led away, Rosa seemed confused and anxious, but Edith gently encouraged her, “Come, Rosa. We go for our people.” The sisters were deported to Auschwitz and executed a week later. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1998.

Reports from those close to St. Teresa in those final days show her to have been a woman of remarkable interior strength, giving courage to her fellow travelers, and helping feed and bathe the little ones when their mothers were too full of despair to care for them. One of the women who survived the war told of her impression of Teresa Benedicta during the long hours they spent awaiting transportation to “the East:”

Maybe the best way I can explain it is that she carried so much pain that it hurt to see her smile. ... In my opinion, she was thinking about the suffering that lay ahead. Not her own suffering — she was far too resigned for that — but the suffering that was in store for the others. Every time I think of her sitting in the barracks, the same picture comes to mind: a Pieta without the Christ.¹⁸

Although she did not seek death, St. Teresa Benedicta's life seems truly marked by the cross or, as she would say, blessed by the cross. Many schools and institutions have been named after her, including a classroom at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.¹⁹

II. Philosophy of the Person

Edith Stein's mature theory of the nature of human beings is a result of the phenomenological method applied to our experience of ourselves and others as embodied, living, and acting beings. This method analyzes an object (which can be a thing, person, mental state, fictional creature, etc.) by a four-step process. (Step 1) Set aside all preconceived assumptions about the object to be considered, including whether it corresponds to anything in the real world. (Step 2) Carefully attend to the object itself, as presented to the mind, perhaps considering it in different contexts or attending to the way we speak about it. (Step 3) Determine what is essential to our idea of the thing — what features or properties cannot be removed from any instance of it. This is the *ideal essence* of that object. (Step 4) If objective (mind-independent)

existence belongs essentially to the object-as-experienced, it is reasonable to conclude that its *ideal essence* corresponds to its *real essence* — that is, to its actual nature.

Phenomenological realism, the theory adopted by Edith Stein, Max Scheler, Roman Ingarden, and Karol Wojtyła, thus reaches conclusions about reality. As one philosopher defines it, “phenomenological ontology ... [is] a method based in the assumption that there are essential correlations between kinds of objects and the modes of cognition by means of which they can be known.”²⁰ These correlations make it possible to describe reality by attending to our experience of that reality. Phenomenological realists, however, would not call this principle an assumption. Rather, they believe it is the best explanation for the way we apprehend the objects. For example, one’s conception of a cat enters the mind as a perception — coming from outside the mind, without any choice on one’s own part, presenting itself independently of the will, and having stable and recognizable features, such that we are able to converse with another person about *the same cat*, even though we do not share the same inner perception of it.

For example, Edith Stein’s study of empathy convinced her that the actual emotions and attitudes of others can often be discerned by attending to the way they manifest themselves to us — not just in language, which is a mediated access to these emotions, but directly — through a person’s expression, posture, and the like. For instance, when a close friend fails to achieve an important goal, we sometimes say that “we can read the disappointment in her face.” Stein takes such expressions quite literally. In fact, she goes so far as to say that an emotion and its expression are two sides of the same reality. When we see a person overwhelmed with grief, she claims, “the sad countenance ... is at one with the sadness. ... The countenance is the outside of the sadness. Together they form a natural unity.”²¹

In empathy, Stein claims, we grasp the human body as the revelation of an individual person; the body makes the inner self visible to others. The fact that the body is an incarnation of the person is essential both to self-knowledge and knowledge of other persons. Through our experiences of other human beings, we come to realize that they are like ourselves, rational beings who are subjects and not mere objects of action. This fundamental truth about human beings makes frequent appearances in the work of Karol Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II). For example, in his 1958 lectures to university students, later published as *Love and Responsibility*,²² Wojtyła insists that “man’s nature differs fundamentally from that of the animals. It includes the power of self-determination, based on reflection, and manifested in the fact that a man acts from choice.”²³

Wojtyła argues that this self-determining nature of human beings entails that each one is irreplaceable, since one’s own will can never become the will of another: “The point here is not that a person is a unique and unrepeatable entity,” he says, “for this can be said just as well of any entity. ... The incommunicable, the *inalienable*, in a person is intrinsic to that person’s inner self, to the power of self-determination, free will. *No one else can want for me.*”²⁴ The fact that persons are irreplaceable in this way is a key theme in Edith Stein’s work as well, and underscores her emphasis on the essential individuality of every person.

Approaching human beings “from within,” by way of the phenomenological method, gives one a grasp of humans’ inner experiences, and empathetically entering into the experience of others reveals their essential individuality. Each one possesses a unique personal core. Stein describes this as a specification of the human form or soul that is common to every human being. We might think of it as a “shape” or “coloring” of that form. For example, Beethoven is human as possessing a human nature (i.e. a human form or soul), but his way of living out that humanity flows from the more specific version of that nature — what we might call a “Beethoven-shaped soul.”

For Edith Stein, a person’s unique essence or core is the realization of God’s idea of him or her. Each person reflects the glory of the Creator in a different way, since each is fundamentally unique and each one’s experience of God is necessarily different from that of others. She accepts Aristotle’s description of “the end for man,” namely, that the good for human beings is to realize their distinctively human capacities to the fullest extent possible. However, she argues that we should not stop at this point, since it could give the impression that every person has the same purpose and that those who fail to fulfill it are, in effect, failures as human beings.

Stein proposes that the theory of individualized human forms or personal essences solves this problem by allowing that each human being has a purpose specific to him or her. The end for human beings, then, is not just to become fully human in a generic sense, but rather to become fully themselves — to become the human persons God intended them to be. Her notion of the unique purpose of each human life plays a major role both in her theory of education and her understanding of the vocation of women.

Stein did not develop a full-fledged theory of morality, but John Paul II employs her theory of persons as an ontological basis the fundamental law of morality, what he calls the Personalist Norm: “The person is a good toward which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.”²⁵ Another way of stating this principle is that it is always gravely wrong to treat a person as an object or as a mere means to an end. Doing so represents a person as a mere thing or object, and so justifies similar treatment of oneself. Rather, humans must act in accordance with truth if they are to find the fulfillment they seek, and the fundamental truth about human beings is that they are irreplaceable and inviolable. Not even God can make the will of a human person his own will.²⁶

III. Women’s Place in the World

Objections to a Unique Vocation for Women

Edith Stein’s beautiful description of the feminine soul can be better understood, I believe, if we read it in the context of the contrasting feminist model promoted in the first two decades of the 20th century. From Stein’s address on women’s place in national life, we have already derived two major goals of what Stein calls secular feminism, even radical feminism: *emancipation* of women in general and *individual women* in particular, enabling each one to freely pursue her interests and cultivate her abilities.

In Stein’s further discussion of women, there is no suggestion that she rejects these goals.

The “radicality” of radical feminists stems rather from their response to those who opposed equal rights for women. Claims that “a woman’s place is (exclusively) in the home” so infuriated these early suffragists, says Stein, that “in the heat of battle, they went so far as deny completely the feminine singularity — that women were any different from men. Consequently, one could not speak of an *intrinsic feminine value*. (As a matter of fact, their only goal was to insist that women were equal to men in all fields.)”²⁷

While Stein accepts a version of the equality claim, she objects strongly to the denial of male/female differences. That denial, she believes, is grounded in the assumption that *equal rights for women can be justified only by proving that women are identical with men in every relevant respect*. In other words, if women and men are to compete on an equal footing, women must show that they are indistinguishable from men with regard to (a) the qualities necessary for success in the workplace, such as intelligence, stamina, leadership skills, decision-making ability, calmness under pressure, and commitment to one’s employer and (b) the priority given to work as compared to family life and personal relationships, the values guiding one’s work, and the criteria to be used in setting policies and making business decisions.

While virtually every woman would agree with (a), (b) is more problematic. Nonetheless, identity-feminists insist that accepting any fundamental differences between women and men is certain to undermine the gains women have made during the previous decades. A logical implication of the feminist assumption described above is that *accepting differences between women and men opens the door to devaluing women in comparison with men (or vice versa)*. Obviously, difference does not *entail* inequality, but historically speaking, real or alleged differences between men and women have been used to justify unequal and unjust treatment of women. Although this claim is undeniably true, history is not always destiny.

In fact, Stein believes that (by the time of her 1928 address) that,

[W]e women have become aware once again of our singularity. Many a woman who formerly denied it has perhaps become aware of it, painfully aware of it, if she has entered one of the traditionally masculine professions and seen herself forced into conditions of life and work alien to her nature.²⁸

This result is not inevitable, however, even for women in such professions. She adds that even professions typically more attractive to men “can be practiced in an authentically feminine way. ... One can even say that the development of the feminine nature can become a blessed counter-balance precisely here where everyone is in danger of becoming mechanized and losing his humanity.”²⁹ It follows, then, that “no legal barriers of any kind [to women’s access to kinds of work] should exist. Rather, one can hope that a natural choice of vocation may be made thanks to an upbringing, education, and guidance in harmony with the individual’s nature.”³⁰ Notice that for Stein, the individual’s nature is the bottom line in determining her vocation, not simply her human nature or even her feminine nature.

Stein on the Vocation of Women

Edith Stein’s lectures and writings on women speak directly to the feminist assumptions described here. She agrees that *some attempts* to assign a vocation to women can reinforce

negative and restrictive stereotypes of women. However, she correctly points out that describing the uniqueness of women *need not* produce that result, and she is hopeful that this outcome can be avoided by a more thoughtful analysis of the gifts and sensitivities characteristic of women. Properly understood, acknowledging a feminine difference can provide an incentive to include women in as many public environments as possible. Similarly, denying gender differences can work against women, since the effort to imitate masculine models of work is likely to be a losing battle. If it is true that women's equality depends on shaping themselves into credible versions of men, equality will be a long time in coming.

While Stein allows that every profession should be open to women, she believes that even a profession in line with one's inclinations and abilities is not necessarily a path to fulfillment. Some women will find "that their expectations are unfulfilled and they long to be elsewhere. Frequently, this is due to their having taken pains to fill their post 'just like a man.' They have neither searched for nor found the ways and means to make their feminine nature fruitful in professional life."³¹

Stein's discussion of women's vocation offers a different way of combating sexism. Rather than denying gender differences, Stein wishes to show their importance for society and for human flourishing (of men as well as women). The identity-feminist strategy of denying male/female differences eventually runs afoul of the facts, since both informal observations and scientific research on males and females reveal significant structural, dispositional, and behavioral differences. In the United States, since the 1980s, some academic women have come to accept and celebrate female differences, arguing for the importance and value of women's perspectives on moral and political problems.³²

Contemporary readers might be surprised to find that Stein believes that women's natural capacities enable them to perform the same public roles as men and to perform them equally well. She also insists that all human beings have a common vocation *as human*. While there may be secular ways of understanding that vocation, Stein begins from God's instructions to Adam and Eve in the *Genesis* creation narrative: "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it."³³ Every human being is given the same calling, to fruitfulness and to work. *Fruitfulness* in this context is not limited to procreation, but it does have a personal focus; everyone can contribute to making the world safer and more conducive to family life, and can offer support to families in a variety of ways.

The call to *work* includes every enterprise that contributes to the common good. Beyond these vocations, Stein points out that every human being is called, in and through his work and relationships, to give himself freely to others and to receive others as a gift. Each act of *genuine love* brings one closer to the God who is Love. Though Stein describes the human vocation in Scriptural terms, she believes it is addressed to every person and that, in some way, each one knows that he or she is called in this way.³⁴ She sums up the threefold vocation of human beings as follows: "they are to be the image of God, bring forth posterity, and be masters over the earth."³⁵

According to Stein, then, the particular vocation of women is simply one way of carrying out the threefold human vocation, a way that is distinctive of women, based on their unique attributes, capacities, strengths, and priorities. These give women a “style” or approach to the human vocation that is, generally speaking, significantly different from that of men. That uniqueness, especially when understood as part of the divine plan, indicates that women are called to bring their perspective and sensitivities to the persons and tasks for which they are responsible. Likewise, men are called to exercise their uniquely masculine outlook and sensitivities in family life, public life, and the workplace.

The Feminine Soul

As noted above, Stein accepts the definition of human beings offered by Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. A human is a rational animal, *a unity of body and soul*. In each human being, the rational soul is the source of life and activity, and the body is the organic structure that, together with the form, constitutes an individual member of the species. On this Thomistic view, there is no independently existing form of humanity or “generic” human soul; human souls exist only as constitutive of this or that human being. However, since the form of humanity is common to every human being, each shares in the capacities that are essential to rational beings — consciousness and self-consciousness, rationality, and freedom. Even when restricted in their exercise by physical or emotional impairments, these essential capacities (or potentialities) are always present.

Stein endorses the view that *rationality and the capacity for free choice* belong by nature to every human being. She also accepts St. Thomas's argument that the human soul is immaterial, since it is the source of such non-spatial activities as thinking and choosing, along with his claim that, since a spiritual thing cannot be produced by material causes, God creates each human soul *ex nihilo* at the moment of conception.

Given this understanding of human beings as a union of body and soul, where the soul is created for a specific body, Stein reasons that important characteristics of the body will affect the soul, not only after conception but also prior to it, in God's *ex nihilo* creation of the soul of that body. Since every human being is, of necessity, either male or female, and the two sexes exhibit significant differences beyond physiology, it is plausible to conclude that the female soul has some spiritual qualities distinct from those of the male soul. As Stein puts it, “It follows also from the Thomistic principle of *anima forma corporis* [the soul is the form of the body] that ... woman shares a basic human nature, but her faculties are different from men; therefore a differing type of soul must exist as well.”³⁶ “Different faculties” here means different *characteristic ways of employing* the human faculties of knowing, feeling, choosing, etc. She is not claiming that women have more (or fewer) of these faculties than men have (perhaps eyes in the back of their heads?).

Stein does not argue that biology is destiny, just that the fundamental physical differences between men and women profoundly mark their personalities. A woman's body stamps her soul with qualities that are (1) *common* to all women and (2) *different* from distinctively mas-

culine traits. Stein views male/female differences as *complementary* rather than hierarchical or oppositional. Since men and women are designed to collaborate in the generation and formation of children, their respective strengths should enable them to engage in a *fruitful collaboration*. Edith Stein believes that the complementary strengths of men and women also help them realize their need for each other, not only in marriage and rearing children, but also in politics, the business world, professional life, and every noble occupation. Differences between women and men, then, should be recognized and welcomed, not minimized and deplored.

Stein also acknowledges that some women possess qualities more typically found in men and some men exhibit gifts or tendencies more characteristic of women, whether because of nature or nurture. Differences between individuals are certainly of utmost importance as well, and Stein's philosophical and pedagogical theories continually emphasize the need to focus on *each* person and on the *whole* person. The primacy of the individual does not compete with Stein's claims about the feminine and masculine soul, however. She holds that each person is first of all human, then male or female, and finally a particular male or female with a unique personal core. Just as sex shapes human nature in a certain general way, so one's personal essence shapes both human nature and femininity or masculinity in a unique way.

Clues to the distinctive qualities of women can be gleaned from many sources — empirical, philosophical, and theological. Unlike many Catholic thinkers, including John Paul II, Stein begins with Eve as the model of authentic womanhood rather than with Mary, the Mother of Jesus.³⁷ Since her lectures on women were often addressed to Catholic audiences, she increasingly included theological and Scriptural considerations in describing women's vocation. A further motivation might have been her growing conviction that the increasing influence of atheism and National Socialism in Germany could only be fought with the help of divine grace — that it was, quite literally, a superhuman task.

Drawing once again on the creation narrative in Genesis, Stein derives two aspects of women's vocation from God's purpose in creating Eve. She is (1) a *companion*, especially to her husband, but to others as well, and (2) a *mother*, since woman and man together are called to be fruitful, to bring new lives into the world, and to help them reach a balanced maturity. In fact, Eve's very name means "mother."³⁸ Stein believes that man's vocation is to (1) *fatherhood* and (2) *work*, as long as he sees his work as at the service of his family and the common good, not as an end in itself. Obviously there are areas of overlap between these two vocations, and it is important to place her theory of the masculine and feminine souls within the wider context of man and woman as equal collaborators. Her remarks on the masculine soul are worth exploring as well, but that is a task for another time.

While companionship and maternal concern comprise the universal vocation of women, Stein suggests that some circumstances may require all women to make a strong public stand for the truths and values they hold dear. This is more a specific exercise of women's vocation rather than an added element of it, but I will discuss it below under the title *Public Witness* to human dignity and the value of human life.

Woman as Companion

Of course this is a vocation for both men and women, but Stein believes that women have a special genius for friendship, perhaps because of their more immediate orientation to persons in their beginnings. We can hear the echoes of Stein's doctoral dissertation on empathy in her later writings on the vocation of women. There she defined *empathy* as *the clear awareness of another person's experience* — not simply of the *content* of that experience, but of *the other person's experience of that content*. In empathy, one takes the place of the other without becoming strictly identical with him or her. So it is not merely *understanding* the other's experiences, but also in some sense *taking them on* as one's own.

Stein's description of empathy displays the close relationship between empathy and love, since love requires a similar identification with the concerns of another person. The ability to enter empathetically into another's life is especially helpful within marriage, of course, but it can and should be exercised in other relationships as well. For single women, consecrated women, and every woman insofar as her circumstances permit, drawing alongside others in their joys and sorrows and listening with an understanding heart is an indispensable task.

A married woman is first a companion to her husband, but her husband is also a companion to her, so in this relationship friendship is reciprocated by friendship. Single women are more available to those outside their immediate family, and their companionship is desperately needed by many who cross their paths. But married women and women in religious life are also called to reach out in friendship to persons who are outside their own circles of home, neighborhood, ethnicity, or religious community. Offering friendship to these requires a more disinterested love, since it is a gift that may not be rewarded in kind. But in Stein's view, opportunities for selfless love allow the highest exercise of women's vocation, as they bear a closer resemblance to the love God has for his creatures.

Stein is said to have practiced what she preached on this call to companionship, as many who knew her describe her as a living embodiment of friendship and empathy. Her spiritual director in the late 1920s, Abbot Raphael Walzer, wrote that she possessed "a tender, even maternal, solicitude for others. She was plain and direct with ordinary people, learned with the scholars, a fellow-seeker with those searching for the truth. I could almost say she was a sinner with the sinners."³⁹ Empathy never stands apart from others, appraising or judging them from without; it enters into their experiences with understanding and kindness.

Maternal concern

Maternal watchfulness and care is the second characteristic Stein attributes to the feminine soul. She derives this claim in part from women's close connection to human birth and development. As especially entrusted with human life, she says, woman is drawn to activities that assist and serve human persons. "Woman naturally seeks to embrace whatever is *living, personal, and whole*. To cherish, guard, protect, nourish, and advance growth is her natural, maternal yearning."⁴⁰ In fact, Stein goes so far as to say that material objects tend to engage women's interest only if they bear in some way on the welfare of persons. Women naturally

value personal relationships above paid work, public success, reputation, and power.⁴¹ It is not that the latter have no importance for women or that it is wrong to seek them; but women are alert to the ways in which they can obscure the value of human beings, life, family, and relationships. Sometimes the pursuit of wealth is allowed to trump the pursuit of the true, the good, and the beautiful, making it difficult to build a culture of dignity and respect — especially respect for women.

In addition to their interest in the personal, Stein notes that women are also attentive to the talents and needs of each individual, one of those qualities that make women good at caring for and educating children, helping each one to develop his or her specific gifts and capacities, and come to see their unique personhood as a gift. A person's individual essence, as Stein describes it, is expressed through her voice, expressions, and gestures, through her way of approaching new things, what she creates, the friends she enjoys, and a million other observable details. Women notice the details, even when not consciously intending to, and the details reveal the person.

Finally, maternal concern aims at the development of the *whole person* as a unity of body, soul, and spirit. No one of these aspects is to be sacrificed to any other. In particular, there is to be no split between minds and bodies that could result in treating persons (for Stein, this especially means students) as if they were disembodied minds.

Women in the Home

Given the empathy and sensitivity required for this kind of personalized formation, Stein gives high praise to women who center their lives on home and family. They recognize the importance of providing a warm and welcoming environment, one that is a haven for all who enter and that helps children in their whole being to grow into men and women who know God and are ready to embrace the vocation he entrusts only to them. Treating homemaking and the formation of one's children as tasks worthy of one's talents and energies is a witness to the truth that persons have infinite value.

While it is characteristic of identity-feminism to see husbands, children, and housework as obstacles to a woman's personal fulfillment, faith-informed feminism sees them as contributing to her fulfillment. These opposed attitudes often stem from competing models of the good for women and for human beings generally. If the goal of life is to fulfill as many of one's desires as possible, home and family life will prevent most women from achieving that goal. But if fulfillment comes instead from learning how to give and receive genuine love, there is no better path to it than family life.

Stein believes that, rather than attempting to become indistinguishable from men, women should work toward creating a culture that values the things women value. Many of these are intangible qualities, such as human flourishing, supportive work environments, peace in human relationships, readiness to make sacrifices, solicitude for others, and respect for the dignity of each human being.

Women in the Public Sphere

Though Stein admires and encourages women who focus their energies on home and family, she does not believe that every woman, even every mother, must restrict her activities to the domestic sphere. When asked whether the natural vocation of women *ruled out* certain professions as unsuitable for them, Stein answered: "One could say that in case of need, every normal and healthy woman is able to hold a position. And there is no profession which cannot be practiced by a woman."⁴² In fact, "every profession in which woman's soul comes into its own and which can be formed by woman's soul is an authentic woman's profession."⁴³ It is likely that some professions will continue to attract more women than men, especially those with a strong personal component. We might expect to find a larger percentage of women than men drawn to fields like teaching, medicine, law, social work, and psychology, for example.

At the same time, it is obvious that not everyone can choose the sort of work they find most attractive, and many women, like many men, will hold jobs that are not especially suited to them. But Stein believes that every kind of work can be done in a feminine way; that is, every task can be carried out with sensitivity to persons, and the good of persons should be the goal of all our activities — for men as well as for women. Keeping that goal in mind is essential for reorienting a culture bent on maximizing pleasure, power, status, and consumer goods. It is good for the health of society, then, that women be welcomed into every profession.

Working Mothers

Stein next turns her attention to the many women, including wives and mothers, who work in paid or unpaid positions outside the home. Though this was not her own situation, it was one her mother had faced. The difficulty of balancing work and family life is perhaps the most pressing problem for working mothers, as they try to determine whether attention to one is doing injustice to the other. Obviously, women in this situation need a significant amount of help at home if they are to work without collapsing from exhaustion or despair.

Hiring someone to care for one's children is one strategy here, and Stein sees no harm in doing so, though it is best if children can be cared for by someone who is already close to them in some way. Further, a husband is responsible for promoting the welfare of each family member, including his wife. If she is working outside as well as inside the home, he too must take a greater role in the life of the home.

On the other hand, trying for a 50/50 contribution of both husband and wife to every domestic task is both unrealistic and undesirable. When working mothers are asked whether they would continue to work if they did not need the income, the vast majority would prefer not to work at all or to work just part-time. The truth is that women enjoy their children (for the most part), and they want to influence each one in the right direction and help them to flourish physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Stein insists that fathers also play an extremely important role in children's lives, though their contribution is not exactly the same. In short, wives and husbands need each other, and children need them both.

Stein does not offer a specific solution for the problem of balancing work and family obliga-

tions; perhaps what solutions there are will vary significantly from one woman to the next. The most important strategy, she advises, is to seek divine guidance, and to strive to be open to what God asks of one. For every woman, Stein claims, "if her life is anchored completely in Jesus, then also, she is best protected against the dangerous loss of moderation. ... Whatever is surrendered to Him is not lost but is saved, chastened, exalted, and proportioned out in true measure."⁴⁴

Women's Education

Stein taught at a women's college for many years and so was responsible for the formation of young women at a pivotal time in their lives. While at St. Magdalena, Stein translated John Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University* into German and she was deeply affected by it. She concluded that a liberal education of the kind Newman described is just as important for women as it is for men. Some academic subjects may be particularly attractive to women, perhaps as bearing closer relationships to the living and personal, but the others are important as well and can serve as useful correctives to an excessively personal outlook.

Stein declared that domestic skills can be learned at home (this might be overly optimistic in today's world, but the general point still holds), so a university curriculum for women should not differ significantly from what is offered to men. Still, it is of utmost importance that teachers of women know how best to tailor their subject matter and methodologies to the concerns, sensitivities, strengths, and weaknesses of women. For a number of reasons, then, Stein believes that women should be taught primarily by women.

Public Witness of Women

The maternal concern of women, Stein felt, naturally gives them a stake in the life of the whole community, from the PTA to the Presidency. Decisions made by heads of state will impact the society and every member of it, so women have many reasons to be involved in political life and in other professions that influence the nation's laws and policies.

Beyond this, Stein believes that women are sometimes called to witness to the truth in a more public way than their personal vocation normally requires. When the moral compass of a culture has gone awry, or human dignity is violated, women's voices must resound in the public square. A woman's concern for the good of others makes her strong in defending the fundamental truths that give our lives meaning. Refusing to stand silently by when these truths are trampled underfoot is a natural expression of the friendship, concern, and love to which women are called.⁴⁵

When the times grow darker, as in Edith Stein's era, and also perhaps in our own, women are called to speak up with courage and conviction, whatever the consequences. Stein's last public lecture on the vocation of women was addressed to a group of Swiss Catholic women academics in January of 1932. In that talk, she speaks about the responsibility of academics to make a practical difference, both in the lives of their students and in the wider society. University teachers can be tempted to keep their work confined within the walls of office, classroom, and library, so Stein beseeches them to see their work as one way of responding to

their vocation to companionship and maternal concern.

In the rest of the lecture, she further urges her audience to play a more active role in the Catholic groups that were actively combating the creeping moral malignancy that threatened both their countries. She warns that the moral ideal they hold dear, one that sees moral virtues as necessary for human flourishing, will disappear in the next generation unless its defenders are bold enough to bring it outside the ivy-covered walls. The Catholic Women's Movement, both in Switzerland and in Germany, she declares, needs intellectual guidance and leadership in order to pursue its mission effectively.

In fact, Stein believes academic women are called, at times, to roll up their sleeves and enter the political fray whole-heartedly. Even eighty years later, one can hear the urgency in her voice:

Let's get to the point: Are we Catholic academics in contact with organized workers, the Swiss Women's Movement, the Women's Union, and the Christian Socialists? We are not. Why? ... Do we grasp the social problems, the burning problems of today? Do they concern us also? Or are we waiting until others find some solution or until we are submerged by the billows of chaos? Is such an attitude worthy of *an academic woman*? Must we not try to help in deed as well as in thought?

Stein's answer to these questions is obvious. We must do everything we can. It would have been much easier for her to spend her life in regret and bitterness, focusing on the many times her own vocational choices were thwarted — she was denied a university post, asked to postpone her entrance into religious life, then required to spend several years teaching students far below the intellectual level for which she was trained. Looking at Stein's life from today's vantage point, we can be tempted to read it from back to front, allowing her years at Carmel and her beautiful writings on the spiritual life to cast an unrealistic glow over her earlier experience as a professional woman who had to earn her living at a post she would not have chosen. Instead of bemoaning her fate or putting in a lackluster performance, however, Stein brought the same passion and enthusiasm to her teaching at St. Magdalena that she brought to her philosophical research, her lectures, her university work, and her life in the convent.

Those "silent years" gave Stein experiences and opportunities for reflection that prepared her to construct a coherent philosophy of education, including guidelines for its practical implementation, just as the movement for Catholic education was beginning to take shape at the end of the 1920s. Then, when her post at the German Institute made it possible, Stein gave herself unstintingly to the task of thinking through the features of a truly Catholic education, one that would address the whole person and the personal capacities of each individual. She spoke widely and boldly in defense of women and their fundamental right, not just to the same opportunities as men, but to an education that would prepare them to take advantage of those opportunities — an education by women for women. What would such an education look like? Stein was ready with an answer, because she had accepted every turn in her life's journey as the path chosen for her by God, placing her considerable gifts wholly at his service.

IV. Role Models for Women

Edith Stein was well aware that no woman can live out her vocation in a vacuum. It is important for every woman, and especially for younger women, to find living examples of authentic women who are both active in the world and at peace in their souls. This is one reason she insisted on the importance of women as educators of women. Stein proposes three examples of authentic women. First, she looks to the *strong woman of Proverbs 31*, a woman possessed of many virtues, who is revered by her husband and children, and is also a capable businesswoman with tasks and responsibilities outside the home. She is industrious, bold, generous, and wise. What is her secret? Stein believes we can find it in the phrase, “a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.”⁴⁶ Her writings on women refer many times over to the necessity of a deep interior life for living the feminine vocation well.

Stein's second example is Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Mary is both the master of the interior life and the living embodiment of perfect womanhood. If it is true, as John Paul II so often claimed, that Jesus Christ reveals man to himself, it is also true that Mary reveals woman to herself. Preserved from sin by God's grace, Mary's feminine soul reflects the original design of God for each woman. Mary teaches us how to give ourselves wholly to God — what it means to be always and in every activity “the handmaid of the Lord.” Hence, she is a model not only for women in the home, but also for women called to religious life, women in the professions, and women in business or politics, because the vocation of woman is everywhere the same — to serve other persons and the common good as one who is God's servant first.

Finally, Stein urges women to look to their *own mothers* for insight into what it means to be an authentic woman. Undoubtedly, her essays and lectures on women owe much to the example of her own mother, with whom Stein always felt a special kinship. Our mothers are our most familiar examples of what a loving woman's life looks like in the day-to-day. Sometimes “spiritual mothers” are equally important in this regard, and teachers lead the list of such mentors. Stein considered teaching both a privilege and a serious responsibility for this very reason.

In closing, I would like to propose a fourth model of authentic womanhood; it is, of course, Edith Stein herself. When Professor Josef Möller spoke at the dedication of the Edith Stein Student Residence in Tübingen, he described her as one who “while never abandoning serious reflection as a Christian, came to place the love of the Crucified above all philosophical investigation and debate. Though to some extent she expressed this love in words ... so fully did she express it in action that, by comparison, the significance of her work seems to become almost insignificant.”⁴⁷ And when the culmination of Stein's philosophical work, *Finite and Eternal Being*, was published posthumously in 1950, a friend from her student days, Fritz Kaufmann, wrote a review that must be without parallel in academic journals. Edith Stein was a woman of faith, he writes, “just as faithfulness in every regard, an adamant and shining faithfulness, was the quintessence of her being. It lived in every one of her words, looks, and deeds.”⁴⁸

That quality of faithfulness, what Kaufmann calls *adamant faithfulness*, recalls Stein's medi-

tations on the Blessed Virgin Mary. In her last address to academic women, in which she implores her Catholic colleagues to widen their vision and their hearts, Stein describes the mother of Jesus as “the ideal type of woman who knew how to unite tenderness with power. *She stood under the cross*. She had previously concerned herself about the human condition, observed it, understood it! In her son’s tragic hour, she appeared publicly.”⁴⁹ Perhaps in the past women have been willing to accept too passive a role. “The twentieth century demands more!” The same could be said of our own time; indeed, of every time.

In her closing remarks on that occasion, Stein calls women to become prophetic witnesses to the value of human life and the importance of faith in God. “Perhaps the moment has almost come,” she says, “for the Catholic woman also to stand with Mary and with the Church under the cross. ... We will not overcome this mountain of difficulties by our own power, but we will do it well through *that sign*. We will be *victorious* in the sign of the cross.”⁵⁰ A decade after her passionate speech at Zurich, Teresa Benedicta of the Cross died in Auschwitz.

Writing as a woman in philosophy, I must confess that I am deeply humbled by Edith Stein’s example of intellectual seriousness, moral courage, and selfless love — for family, friends, students, and colleagues; for her people, the Jews, and her countrymen, the Germans, especially those most in need of God’s mercy. From a century ago, Stein still speaks to the women of today, challenging them to live the vocation entrusted to them and make it fruitful, with the help of God’s grace.

It seems only fitting to close with one of her most beautiful descriptions of the feminine soul:

The soul of woman must therefore be *expansive* and open to all human beings; it must be *quiet* so that no small weak flame will be extinguished by stormy winds; *warm* so as not to benumb fragile buds; *clear*, so that no vermin will settle in dark corners and recesses; *self-contained*, so that no invasions from without can peril the inner life; *empty of itself*, in order that extraneous life may have room in it; finally, *mistress of itself* and also of its body, so that the entire person is readily at the disposal of every call.⁵¹

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ENDNOTES

¹ In 1996, the Archbishop of Paris, Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger visited New York to give a lecture on the meaning of culture. I was able to speak with him privately for a moment and asked whether he thought Edith Stein’s work had influenced the work of John Paul II. His response was, “Oh yes; enormously! The Holy Father has great admiration for Edith Stein.”

² See Sarah Borden, *Edith Stein*, (New York: Continuum, 2003), 3.

³ Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 3rd rev. ed., Waltraut Stein, ed. *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, Vol. 3 (Washington: ICS, 1989).

⁴ In the United States, scholars are often hired on the strength of a doctorate alone and begin as assistant professors. After about six years, a successful application for tenure is normally accompanied by the rank of associate professor.

Finally, additional publications in respected journals or presses can qualify one for the rank of full professor. The only more prestigious position is to hold a chair in one's discipline, a highly-paid position normally funded by an endowment and requiring few, if any, teaching duties so as to allow more time for research.

⁵ Borden, *Edith Stein*, 8.

⁶ Antonio Calcagno, *The Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne, 2007), 13. Husserl's remarks are published in a collection of his letters: Edmund Husserl, "Empfehlungsschreiben Husserls für Stein, 6.II.1919," *Briefwechsel*, K. Schumann and E. Schumann, eds., in *Husserliana Dokumente*, Vol. 3 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), 549.

⁷ Borden, *Edith Stein*, 8.

⁸ Edith Stein, *Potency and Act, The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, Vol. 11, L. Gerber and Romaeus Leuven, eds. (Washington: ICS, 2009).

⁹ Stein, "Problems of Women's Education," *Essays on Woman, The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, Vol. 2, L. Gerber and Romaeus Leuven, eds., Freda Mary Oben, trans. (Washington: ICS, 1987), 159-160.

¹⁰ The mission and activities of the league are detailed in an article by Mary M. Macken, "The German Catholic Women's League," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 20 (1931): 555-69.

¹¹ Edith Stein, "The Significance of Woman's Intrinsic Value in National Life," *Essays on Woman*, 247.

¹² Stein, "Woman's Intrinsic Value," 247.

¹³ Pope Pius XI, *Mit Brennender Sorge (With Burning Sorrow)*, section 4. The encyclical was published on Passion Sunday, March 14, 1937. It is available online at www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_14031937_mit-brennender-sorge_en.html.

¹⁴ Wikipedia Contributors, "Mit Brennender Sorge," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, revised March 16, 2011, available online at: en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mit_brennender_Sorge&oldid=419190938. The quote is from Frank J. Coppa, *The Papacy, the Jews, and the Holocaust* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2006), 162-63.

¹⁵ Edith Stein, "141: Letter to Elly Dursy (Sr. Maria Elisabeth of Divine Providence, OCD), Auerath Carmel, May 7, 1933," *Self-Portrait in Letters, The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, Vol. 5, eds. L. Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Josephine Koeppl (Washington: ICS, 1993), 114.

¹⁶ Waltraud Herbstrith, *Edith Stein: A Biography* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992), 119.

¹⁷ Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 178.

¹⁸ Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 182-83.

¹⁹ Wikipedia Contributors, "Edith Stein," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, revised March 14, 2011, available online at en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edith_Stein&oldid=418861599.

²⁰ Amie Thomasson, "Roman Ingarden," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 Edition)*, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Available online at plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/ingarden.

²¹ Stein, *Problem of Empathy*, 77.

²² Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, H. T. Willetts, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981.) The lectures were given in 1958 and 1959.

²³ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 23-24.

²⁴ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 24.

²⁵ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 41.

²⁶ Of course this is only a conditional necessity. If free will is essential to persons, God cannot create persons who lack it. (Here "free will" refers to an innate power; there may be many restrictions on one's ability to exercise it.)

²⁷ Stein, "Woman's Intrinsic Value," 247.

²⁸ Stein, "Woman's Intrinsic Value," 247.

²⁹ Edith Stein, "The Ethos of Women's Professions," *Essays on Woman*, 48.

³⁰ Edith Stein, "Separate Vocations of Man and Woman," 81. Given her desire to preserve and foster the individual strengths and interests of each child, perhaps it is not surprising that she recommends a Montessori school model of education for every child from infancy until they enter a vocational school. See "Principles of Women's Education," 127.

³¹ Stein, "Ethos of Women's Professions," 54.

³² For examples, see Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking* (New York: Ballantine, 1989) and Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1993).

³³ *Genesis* 1:28, King James Version.

³⁴ In the *Letter to the Romans* 1:7, St. Paul describes this universal vocation: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints."

³⁵ Stein, "Vocations of Man and Woman," 59.

³⁶ Stein, "Ethos of Women's Professions," 43.

³⁷ The topic is presumably Eve before the Fall, but Stein's primary focus is on God's purpose in creating man and woman. In other contexts, she also holds up Mary as the "new Eve" who also fulfills women's vocation to be a reflection of Christ's love, a spiritual companion to all, and a spiritual mother of the whole Body of Christ.

³⁸ *Genesis* 3:20 in the King James Version reads: "And Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of

all the living."

³⁹ Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 94.

⁴⁰ Stein, "Ethos of Women's Professions," 43.

⁴¹ Here Stein's thinking lines up with "gender feminist" authors like Carol Gilligan (see note 34), who claims that women approach moral questions with more attention to the people affected by their decisions than to abstract, impersonal considerations of duty, rights, or justice.

⁴² Stein, "Ethos of Women's Professions," 47.

⁴³ Stein, "Ethos of Women's Professions," 56.

⁴⁴ Stein, "Vocations of Man and Woman," 78.

⁴⁵ The call to selfless love is part of the threefold human vocation described above: to fruitfulness, work, and love.

⁴⁶ *Proverbs* 31:30, King James Version.

⁴⁷ Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 142. She cites Josef Möller, *Edith Stein — Persönlichkeit und Vermächtnis*, ed. A. Hufnagel (Stuttgart, 1967), 15.

⁴⁸ Fritz Kaufmann, "Review of *Finite and Eternal Being*," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 12: 577.

⁴⁹ Stein, "Challenges Facing Swiss Catholic Academic Women," *Essays on Woman*, 267.

⁵⁰ Stein, "Challenges," 268.

⁵¹ Stein, "Principles of Woman's Education," *Essays on Woman*, 119. Stein elaborates on each of these qualities in the pages that follow.

PARADIGM LOST

GERTRUD VON LE FORT'S *THE ETERNAL WOMAN*

■
BY MARGARET MONAHAN HOGAN

In the solitary confinement of his prison cell, in the midst of personal turmoil marked by antipodal passions of hope and helplessness, Fr. Alfred Delp wrote of his longing for persons and institutions that might shape history rather than just react to its unfolding. The Catholic Universities in America might, if they so choose, fulfill that task. However, it is not so evident that they will so choose. The American Catholic Universities in their efforts to be inclusive and diverse in their curriculum as well as in their communities have developed programs to reflect those desires and to accomplish those ends. But more often than not, these efforts have reflected the values of the contemporary culture — radical equality, the absolutization of personal choice, the enthronement of science, and moral relativism — rather than the values of the Catholic culture — human beings created as male and female in the image of God, surrender to God as the source, sustainer, and end of human life, respect for the gift of science without ceding to domination by the possibility of its technical prowess, and, finally, moral objectivity. Often these values of the contemporary culture are voiced in particular enclaves within the American Catholic University and they are often voiced in a particularly strident fashion in Women's Studies Programs. One of the challenges, then, for the Catholic woman in the twenty-first century is to frame her position so that it informs the curriculum in the Catholic university and it nurtures and leavens the communities that constitute the Catholic university. The recall of voices from the recent past can serve to inform and to give content to her voice. One of those voices of the recent past is that of Baroness Gertrud von Le Fort. The purpose of this paper is to present the work of Gertrud von Le Fort as containing, perhaps, in her account of the incarnate symbol that is Mary and her account of the roles of woman an antidote to assuage some of the ills of the contemporary culture. Because for she is largely unknown in the contemporary intellectual circles, the paper will proceed by (1) presenting an introduction to the woman and her work against the background of the culture that framed her life — a culture marked by so much death and destruction and displacement, and (2) by explicating the central notions of her work *The Eternal Woman* and from that perspective to consider a path forward to contribute to the repair of our broken world.

I. Introduction

Gertrud von Le Fort was one of Germany's outstanding authors in the twentieth century — a century marked by terrible social upheaval and dislocation, by totalitarianism, and by war — all fueled by millenarianism, by scientism, and by force. Millenarianism is a kind of utopianism that claims that human beings can build a perfect society in this world. In some places it presented itself as communism; in others it presented itself as a form of fascism. Nonetheless each had in common the eclipse of God, the eclipse of each individual human being as

created in God's image, and the enthronement of the State. The cult of scientism operated from the hypothesis that it is possible to know the natural world completely and that this knowledge would provide the tools to manipulate and modify the world in the desired millenarian direction — the operation of Social Darwinism. The exercise of brutal force marked by technological efficiency and terror was bent on the destruction of the extant culture and the annihilation of all those who do not fit the vision for this new Utopia. Within the parameters of this world and this world view Gertrud von Le Fort lived her adult life.

Baroness Gertrud von Le Fort was born in Westphalia, Germany in 1876 and died in Oberstdorf in the Bavarian Alps in 1971. Her early education, as appropriate for one of her social standing, was received by private tutors. She later studied theology, history, and philosophy at Berlin, Marburg, and Heidelberg. She was greatly influenced by the ideas of Ernst Troeltsch and the History of Religions School at Göttingen. After his death she edited his work *The Christian Faith — Glaubenslehre*. That work was published in 1925. She is the author of twenty books (poems, novels, and short stories).

She was a Protestant of Huguenot descent; she was received into the Catholic Church in 1925 or 1926 or 1927 ... depending on the biographer. Of that conversion she wrote the following in the influential journal *Hochland*:

The convert is not, as an uncomprehending interpretation at times suggests, someone who explicitly emphasizes the painful denominational separation, but on the contrary someone who has overcome it. His actual experience is not that of another faith to which he "goes over," but that of the unity of faith ... he has recognized ... that the denominational division is, from an ultimate religious viewpoint, not so much a division of faith as a division of love. [The convert should represent] the living reunion of separated love ... he is as it were ... the bridge that touches and joins two shores (Klieneberger, 437).

This spirit of deep respect for the religious traditions of others — part of the legacy of Troeltsch and part of her own study of history — is noted by Klieneberger in an article in the Irish Journal, *Studies*. There he wrote:

Far from being a rebel against her native environment [the Huguenot tradition] like some other converts, she responded to the positive, inclusive and comprehensive gesture of Catholicism, and indeed, felt confirmed in the possession of her inherited convictions and values by her membership in the Church (Klieneberger, 436).

This respect for other religious traditions is found in many of her works. *The Wedding of Magdenberg* tells a tale of Christian communities, which should be united by a common creed, and recounts their terrible taking up of the sword against each other. *The Tower of Constancy* records, with great respect, the faith of Huguenot women, who despite their harsh imprisonment, live lives marked by serenity born of their knowledge that they, despite their physical imprisonment, have yet the most important freedom — the interior freedom to hold their faith. Her medieval tale *The Pope from the Ghetto*, which appeared at the height of the anti-Jewish agitation in Germany, exhibits her respect for the erudition, religious practices, and religious aspirations of this particular Jewish community set in medieval Rome as well as

their struggles and humiliations, and the disaster that ensues when differing religious traditions are not accorded respect. Her regard for the religious aspirations of all — of Christians, Protestant and Catholic, and of Jews — evident in this work earned her the enmity of the Nazis who declared her works undesirable and removed her name from membership in the Prussian Academy of Arts and Letters..

She, of course, outlived the vaunted new Reich of a thousand years to receive many honors for her work. She was the recipient of an honorary doctorate of theology from the University of Munich and in that award was recognized as Germany's "greatest contemporary transcendent poet." Hermann Hesse, in his acknowledgement of beauty, profoundness, and refinement of her work, proposed her as a candidate for the Nobel Prize in literature. Some claim that her most important work is the 1931 novel — *Die Letzte am Schafott* — *The Last at the Scaffold*. Others claim that this is a marginal work. Nonetheless this work inspired others. It served as the basis for the Georges Bernanos's play *Dialogues des Carmelites* and as well for the opera of Francis Poulenc — the *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and the prize winning film by Raymond Bruckberger and Philippe Agostini. In this novel she recorded — in her portrayal of the effects of the reign of terror in late 18th Century France as witnessed through the martyrdom of the Carmelites of Compiègne — her assessment of the chaos in post World War I Germany, and her fear and loathing of the rising fanaticism of Nazism in contemporaneous Germany. She herself wrote of this novel,

The point of departure for my creation was not primarily the destiny of the sixteen Carmelites of Compiègne but the figure of young Blanche. In a historic sense she [Blanche] never lived, but she received the breath of life from my internal spirit, and she cannot be detached from the origin which is hers. Born in the profound horror of a time darkened by the signs of destiny, this figure arose before me in some way as the embodiment of the mortal agony of an era going totally to its ruin.

In her vivid account of the fear experienced by Blanche, Le Fort seems to claim in this quotation what others have suggested — the terror experienced by Blanche finds its analogue in the terror now entering the life of Le Fort.

Others claim that her poetry, including her *Hymns to the Church* which she composed to celebrate her conversion to Catholicism, represents her most outstanding work. Her poetry in this work has been ranked with that of Paul Claudel. The writings of both Claudel and Le Fort are marked by an understanding of the human search for truth, of the role of suffering in redemption, of the presence of Jesus in human suffering, and of the significance of woman in the work of the Church.

My personal favorite is *Die Frau des Pilates* which records the struggle of Claudia Procula — the wife of Pontius Pilate — as she tried to dissuade Pilate from ordering the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Prior to the appearance of Jesus before Pilate, Claudia Procula had been troubled by dreams in which she heard again and again the words "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried." When at last, Jesus appears before Pilate, she warned her husband to resist the pressure of the mob and the high priests as they demand the execution of

Jesus. This work records as well the three attempts — as told in the four Gospels in Matthew at 27. 1-26, in Mark at 15. 1-15, in Luke at 23. 1-25, and in John at 18. 28-19. 16 — of Pontius Pilate, who could find no guilt in Jesus as Pilate tried to dissuade the Jews from accomplishing the execution of Jesus. The three attempts, you might recall, were — sending Jesus to Herod as the holder of appropriate jurisdiction, the scourging at the pillar, and the Barabbas option. In the end Pilate succumbs to the politics as usual and delivers Jesus to the executioners. After the death of Jesus, Claudia's search for truth that she may worship God takes her to the Christian community in Rome where she encounters ... time after time ... the same haunting words that she had heard in her dreams ... "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried." Her desire to embrace Christianity is impeded initially by her sense that the Christian community will not welcome the wife of Pilate. Le Fort concludes the book with the tale of Claudia Procula's conversion to Christianity and her subsequent martyrdom witnessed by her unsuspecting husband as he watched in horror as the guest of the cruel Emperor.

Gertrud von Le Fort and Edith Stein (Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) knew each other and corresponded with each other. They met in 1932. They came to know each other through the offices of the Jesuit Fr. Eric Przywara — a theologian and philosopher. Fr. Przywara encouraged Stein's work on Saint Thomas Aquinas and Blessed John Henry Newman and he, as acknowledged by Le Fort, facilitated her understanding of Carmelite mysticism. The lives of Le Fort and Stein have, despite significant differences, similar markings. They were both Prussian and they loved that heritage. They were both converts to Catholicism; Stein had been a Jew and Le Fort a Protestant. Suffering love — that of Christ on the Cross and that of the heart of Mary pierced by the sword of sorrow — was central in their writing. The former was more significant for Stein and the latter more significant for Le Fort. They both made significant, albeit different, contributions to the Catholic Women's Movement in Germany between the two great wars of the twentieth century. According to Dr. Freda Mary Oben they "breathed the same ideological climate of Christian faith" (Oben, 227).

II. Le Fort's *The Eternal Woman*

Le Fort's most influential book in the United States has been *The Eternal Woman* whose title is taken from the famous work of Goethe — *Das Ewig-weibliche zieht uns hinan* — "the eternal feminine draws us on" (*The Eternal Woman*, vii — hereinafter TEW). It was originally published in Germany in 1934. It was excerpted and the excerpts published in serial form in *Commonweal* in 1936. The first English edition of the book was published in the United States in 1954. It was reissued in 2010. It seems to be reentering our horizon as one of the voices to guide Catholic feminism in the task of mending the culture in the Twenty-first Century. This small work subtitled *The Timeless Meaning of the Feminine* explores the symbol of the feminine in three themes — The Eternal Woman, The Woman in Time, and The Timeless Woman.

But before attending directly those themes, Le Fort offers two cautions for the reader in the introduction. The first is that she is speaking in the language of symbols and the second is that while her focus is on woman as symbol, it must be remembered that woman is a partial

manifestation of God not the totality of the revelation of God in the world. To speak of woman as symbol is to speak of her as a carrier of meaning — not as abstraction — not as psychological position — not as social position — not as historical position — not as biological presentation — although all these may contribute to carrying the meaning of the revelation of her symbol ... or impede the revelation of the symbol even to woman herself. She says, “The symbol does not disclose the empiric character or condition of the one who for the time being is its bearer; but it expresses the metaphysical significance. The bearer may fall away from the symbol, but the symbol remains — the bearer may reject or deny ... but the symbol remains” (TEW, 3).

Symbols are embodied carriers of meaning; they are “signs through which the ultimate metaphysical realities and modes of being are apprehended, not in an abstract manner but by way of likeness.” To speak the language of symbols is to speak in the language of an invisible reality becoming manifest in the realm of the visible. Le Fort claims that the notion of symbol has its foundation in the conviction that in all beings and things there is an intelligent order and that through these very beings and things that intelligent order reveals itself as a divine order by means of the language of symbols. Humankind — as created in the image and likeness of God — stands a symbol and possible revelation of God. Woman and man — as created in the image and likeness of God — stand as different but partial symbol of humanity and hence different and partial revelation of God. They are as polar but complementary elements of a unitary manifestation of the divine. The revelation carried by humanity is twofold — heroic and compassionate. Man as symbol is heroic ... but also compassionate, however, his compassion reveals itself under a masculine aspect — as exemplified by Saint Aloysius Gonzaga and Saint Vincent de Paul and more recently by Saint André Bessette. Woman is compassionate ... but also heroic, however her heroism manifests itself under a feminine aspect — as exemplified in Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Joan of Arc. Le Fort recalls that the Litany of Loreto depicts Mary — The Eternal Woman — as the carrier of womanly and manly symbols — to wit: Mary is at once Mother most Amiable and Virgin Most Powerful. She is Mystical Rose as well as Mirror of Justice and Tower of David. Mary, Le Fort claims, stands “for the creature in its totality” she “represents at the same time both man and woman,” and moreover, “she represents humankind as unfallen” (TEW, 5).

A. The First Theme: The Eternal Woman

Le Fort's exploration of the concept Eternal Woman begins with a consideration of the property eternity itself after which she turns her attention to woman. A proper consideration of the eternal ought to reveal — unless the confusion of the intellectual surround of the contemporaneous era blinds intelligence or sows chaos — two things to human beings. The first is that only God is eternal and the second is the realization by creatures — their appropriation of the fact — that their reality is not eternal. She says,

In its concept of eternity the created being acknowledges its own relativity and only in this avowal does eternity disclose itself to the creature.

The created being with its temporal limitations, its contingency, becomes submerged in the presence of the timeless, the absolute; and thus absorbed it appears

no longer as a value in itself, but as a thought or mirror of the eternal, as its symbol or vessel (TEW, 6).

The human being is a symbol of the eternal. Man as male is a carrier of the image of God and woman as female is a carrier of the image of God. Le Fort's particular focus in this work is on woman as image in God. And she sets her study within the limits of two caveats. The first avers that she is not studying man as male or man under the generic title man. The second is she is not studying woman as the object of contemporaneous experimental method. She says, — not ... "the empiric image of woman" with a set of relatively unchanging earthy characteristics but ... "the metaphysical countenance of woman — of womanliness as a mystery, its religious rank, its archetype, and its ultimate image in God" (TEW, 6).

Le Fort claims that Mary is the incarnate symbol of woman in the image of God. If the eternal woman is Mary, what specifically does she represent; what does she symbolize to the world? Here Le Fort considers Mary as she is portrayed in history — first in her life as recorded in the New Testament and second in the Marian dogmas proclaimed by the church. The record of Mary in the New Testament is sparse; her role is a hidden role ... and its hiddenness is significant. From the Annunciation through the Crucifixion to Pentecost, with just one exception — the marriage Feast of Cana, Mary's role is as the loving and obedient servant of God and of God incarnate. In regard to the Marian dogmas, Le Fort presents Mary first under the aspect of the dogma of the Immaculata — the Immaculate Conception — the most recent Marian dogma in Le Fort's life. That dogma proclaimed on December 8, 1854 holds that Mary, "in the first instance of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin." In her examination of the meaning of the dogma Le Fort says,

The dogma ... means the revelation of the human being when still unfallen; it betokens the undesecrated countenance of the creature, the image of God in man. From this point of vantage an extraordinary light falls upon the time when the dogma was defined. According to the Church in her concept of time, it came immediately before the moment that the Christian historian and philosopher Berdyaev (1874-1948) characterized as that of the downfall of the human image, an association which only today we can recognize in its full significance (TEW, 9).

Le Fort next turns her attention to Mary as the Virgin of the Annunciation and she finds here the essence of womanliness and of religiosity. She describes Mary's *fiat* as the responsive love to infinite divine love — words that echo Nicholas Berdyaev (xvii). She says,

In the humble fiat of her answer to the angel lies the mystery of redemption insofar as it depends upon the creature. For his redemption, man has nothing to contribute to God other than the readiness of unconditional surrender. The passive acceptance inherent in woman [here Mary], which ancient philosophy regarded as purely negative, appears in the Christian order of grace as the positively decisive factor. The Marian dogma ... denotes the doctrine of the cooperation of the creature in the work of redemption (TEW, 9).

It is important to note here the connection between surrender and redemption. In the surren-

der of Mary comes the redemption of mankind. The great mystery of Christianity — the Incarnation — enters the world by way of woman. Le Fort says, “Wheresoever woman is most profoundly herself, she is not as herself, but as surrendered, and wherever she is surrendered, there she is also bride and mother” (TEW, 11). It is important to note here that the role of woman as bride and mother is not defined biologically or conventionally; it belongs, Le Fort claims, to all women — women in consecrated life, women who are single in the world, and married women with and without children. The bridal and maternal roles have their source in the religious character of woman — *the will to be blessed*. The conception of children is but one manifestation of the will to be blessed. To woman belongs all that resides in the “domain of love, of goodness, of compassion, everything that has to do with care and protection, the hidden, the betrayed things of the earth” (TEW, 12). Le Fort warns that a world in which the influence of the religious force of woman is absent is a world at risk. And the religious influence of woman may be absent by the choice of woman herself as well as by the choice of the world’s powerful. The sin of Eve was her choice — her refusal of surrender. The tempter said, “You shall be like unto God” and with Eve’s ambition sin enters the world. The fiat of Mary constitutes the power of surrender in woman and carries the meaning of the role of woman in the world. Le Fort warns of the consequences of the absence of the metaphysical aspect of woman. She says:

Whenever woman has been suppressed, it was never because she was weak, but because she was recognized and feared as having power, and with reason; for at the moment when the stronger power no longer desires surrender but seeks self-glorification, a catastrophe is bound to ensue (TEW, 13).

There is a reminder here that the only absolute power that creatures have is the power to surrender to God. The madness of the contemporary age ... as well as the age contemporaneous with Le Fort — lies in its claim of strength in its own salvific power — to create the world according to its own image. The futility of the claim is evident in the destruction that issues — and issued — from that madness — a madness that embraced then and embraces now the killing of innocent human beings to accomplish its ends.

B. The Second Theme: Woman in Time

Le Fort’s consideration of woman in time — woman in history and woman in our time — begins with an observation that prompts a question that her probing separates into two questions and to which she indicates the direction of a response. Her observation is that when you examine human history, whether that history be political life, cultural life, or even religious life, it is primarily fashioned by man. Her central question is: “Does this mean that the surrendering power of the cosmos — which is the mystery of woman — implies a further surrender — a renunciation in a metaphysical sense of historical life?” This core question generates two questions: (1) is the kingdom of the religious quality not of this world and (2) does religious mean powerless on earth. She suggests that the direction of the response may be found in (1) the requirement of a new standard of historical evaluation and (2) the requirement of reaching to a more profound level of understanding the power of woman. And it is to that response

that she now attends.

In regard to her observation — it is for the most part true. Look at history ... and even look to the present moment. With the exception of few instances, political life, cultural life and even religious life have been and are fashioned by men. Why is this so ... is this just the result of social conditioning or of social conditions? Le Fort demurs. She claims that man exercises his historically effective talents publicly and in that performance spends his strength. Woman is also the carrier of historically effective talents and while her endowment is equal to man, she expends it not for herself but for the next generation. She is the carrier of the religious — the concealed strength of the culture — which is the surrendering power of the cosmos in the face of the Eternal God. In this surrendering power lie the font of reverence for God and the appropriate humility of the creature as creature. The charism of woman is to be an instrument of God in the world. To bear this charism is to be the handmaid of the Lord. The exercise of this charism more often lies hidden but despite its concealment it carries great strength and character.

Woman in time may be mother or virgin or wife, but she is always bride and spouse. The mystery of Mary as virgin and mother is the incarnate symbol of the dignity of both virginity and motherhood. The fecundity of woman, so obvious in the physical mother, is present in all the forms of woman — mother, virgin, and wife. Le Fort maintains that “it belongs to the meaning of mother that she transmits man’s history making capabilities into a given generation; it belongs to the virgin first to guarantee these capabilities of man as a person” (TEW, 30). The idea of the virgin as a tragic condition ... an idea known to Le Fort’s time ... or the idea of the virgin as a joke ... is an idea peculiar to our time. Woman as virgin or mother or wife anchors her life in love and directs her love to her own family and to the larger human family. As married, woman has the freedom to love in a more specific fashion — my husband, my children (if there are children of the marriage); as unmarried, she transfers her freedom to love to a larger world — the world in which she cooperates in a project or the world as embraced as a whole through prayer. The woman as bridal reflects the reality of the cosmos as the inseparable joining of the two spheres of being, and as the “primal fact that God has established one half of existence as irrevocably feminine” (TEW, 55). At its most distant reach woman is as the consecrated Virgin — the contemplative whose life — as evidenced by the heroism of the Carmelites — “gives evidence of man’s final destiny in God” (TEW, 29) or more locally she is colleague who contributes the feminine to the creative work. In the secular world she is the feminine force as the cooperator in a project. Le Fort maintains that the field of her “power ranges over all things, even over the domain of intellectual creation” (TEW, 36). Each form of a woman’s life has its own fecundity, its own power, and its own value. Each has its trials and tribulations; each is a sign of the value that situates the person in a relationship to God. Each is spousal and each is bridal. As spousal the language of Le Fort is the language of the spouse of a particular man, the spouse of Christ, the spouse of the Holy Spirit — as the Spirit of Love and the Creator Spirit. As bridal her love is directed toward the other. She says,

"[t]he ego has expanded into we; the consciousness of a dual creativeness becomes evident; the character of spiritual creation emerges as life — the bridal character of culture" (TEW, 39) ... "the woman ... having surrendered herself ... under whatever form ... brings the dowry of half a world. In the surrender of the woman as a revelation of this other hemisphere consists her participation in man's cultural creation" (TEW, 41). Further she says, "[e]very sort of cooperation, even the most insignificant between man and woman is, in its bearing upon the wholeness of life, of far greater importance than associations that are purely masculine or feminine." ... and she warns that the latter — carry the danger of being unfruitful because of narrowness or one sidedness" (TEW, 45). This one sidedness and isolation which substitutes the part for the whole and makes the part absolute falsifies the truth. This is the source of heresy.

Le Fort warns that the absence of the religious element from culture, that element of which woman is the principal bearer — portends the decline of culture. She says, "[t]he actual paradox inheres in the fact that it is the self-seeking, the purely worldly culture that falls into decadence, while that which reaches beyond itself attains to an immortal affirmation, a participation in the eternity to which a religious motivation uplifts it" (TEW, 52). She recognizes that woman has become more visible in the world, but she — woman — loses her effectiveness in the world unless she remains the representative of invisible power. There are two specific risks for woman when she sheds her feminine role which is bound to her religious character. The first is that she becomes a man; the second is that she becomes an object for man. Both are misdirected: the first in the direction of excessive love of self and the second in excessive degradation of self.

Le Fort writes of the decline of culture as she witnessed it in her time and her observations provide, for us, a foreboding measure of our own time. She speaks of the decline as manifest in art, in marital infidelity, in divorce, in isolation, and in the one sidedness of culture — sometimes singularly masculine and sometimes singularly feminine. She wrote most vividly the following:

The world of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse is not the kind of war that might be a man's heroic destiny, nor is it famine as failure on the part of nature, or disease and death as the discharging of elemental forces. Rather it may be the work that results from mercenary principles that involve no sense of responsibility, or from a spirit of scholarship grown godless. We know that these two evils are capable of annihilating entire harvests and poisoning a whole people. The woman in time, however, who will be the woman of those latter days is not the great whore of Babylon ... but the every day feminine creature who has leaped out of God's order, who as bearer of her eternal symbol, has ceased to be (TEW, 64-65).

Le Fort continues,

The scales are still trembling. The profound consolation that woman can give to mankind today is her faith in the immeasurable efficacy also of forces that are hidden, the unshakable certainty that not only a visible but also an invisible pillar supports the world. When all earthly potencies shall have exhausted themselves in

vain, and this in the present distress of the world is nearly the case, then even for a humanity grown godless, the hour of the other world will strike again. But the divine creative power will break forth from heaven to renew the face of the earth, only if the earth itself responds again with the religious force with the readiness of the "Be it done unto me" (TEW, 65).

Return to the questions which inaugurated the consideration of woman in time. Her observation was that when you examine human history, whether that history be political life, cultural life, or even religious life, it is primarily fashioned by man. Her answer is: Yes and No — the external expression appears fashioned by men but if it is to be true to the image of God it is only complete with the inclusion of the feminine. Her central question was: Does this mean that the surrendering power of the cosmos — which is the mystery of woman — implies a further surrender — a renunciation in a metaphysical sense of historical life? Her answer is: NO — it is not a renunciation but an appropriation of the life of woman in the order created by God. The appropriation of the feminine is the guarantee of the presence of the image of the divine in the world as male and female and as well the affirmation of the appropriate place of humanity in relationship to God — which affirmation provides direction for the pursuit of good in the world. To the two questions generated by the core question she responds. To the first: is the kingdom of the religious quality not of this world? Her answer is: NO — without the presence of the religious quality the world risks its own internal destruction. To the second: does religious mean powerless on earth? Her answer is: NO, the power of the religious is the invisible power without which the visible pillars of the world have no integrity.

Le Fort suggests that one of the principal obligations of the present is to open up new potentialities for culture — to recognize a renewed spirit of companionship of man and woman in their distinct but cooperating roles — and on this basis on the part of man as well as woman to repair the culture. Woman must retain her bridal role — revealing to man the image of God that she carries as feminine. That image carries her certain faith in the invisible world — the world of spiritual power without which the visible world would crumble, the certain faith that this contemporary world with its joys and sorrows will pass and only an eternity belonging to God will remain.

C. The Third Theme — Timeless Woman

As Le Fort turns her attention to the theme of timeless woman she does so under the symbol of mother. She notes that the world that cries for the role of mother — as did Germany in her time — the time between the two great wars of the twentieth century — is a world that is already broken. But the mother that her contemporaneous order sought is the mother in service to the State — not the mother in her place in the order of creation. She says,

It is only a motherless time that cries out for a mother, and a deeply unmotherly age that can point to the mother as a demand of time, for it is precisely the mother who is timeless, the same in all epochs and among all people. ... Motherhood can never become for woman the special assignment of a certain time; it is her task simply and utterly. The mother as such does not bear the individualizing marks of the person, nor does she carry the stamp of an epoch. With her every temporal

program ends, since time itself has no power over her. Under the form of virgin she stands solitary in the face of time; as bride she shares time with the man who lives it; as mother she conquers time (TEW, 67-68).

As mother woman takes her place not in time but as timeless. Her particular moment in time gives way to the timeless — as timeless as the unfolding of the seasons ... as timeless as from generation to generation. Le Fort reminds us that “[a]t the hour of birth the mother stakes her life without reserve for the child, so after its birth, her life no longer belongs to herself, but to the child” (TEW, 73). The form of the mother is that of she who loves so profoundly that she places her life in the service of life. And this is a love over which death has no power.

Le Fort is quite clear that the symbol of woman as mother does not belong just to the woman who has borne a child. She says, “[T]he mother for whom the human race of today is calling with such deep yearning cannot be only the woman who has a child” (TEW, 77). To be a mother, Le Fort avers,

[M]eans to turn especially to the helpless, to incline lovingly and helpfully to every small and weak thing upon the earth. Therefore the principle of motherhood is a dual one; it attaches itself not only to the birth of the child, but the fostering and protecting of that which has been born.

The world has need of the maternal woman; it is, for the most part, a poor and helpless child. As men come feebly into the world ... so in profound weakness he departs from it.

[She] feeds the hungry, so also does she console the afflicted. The weak and the guilty, the neglected and the persecuted, even the justly punished, all those whom a judicial world no longer wishes to support and protect, find their ultimate rights vindicated in the consolation and the compassion that the maternal woman gives. For her the words of Antigone will always be valid: “Not to hate, but to love with you, am I here” (TEW, 80).

The role of woman as mother, as explicated by Le Fort, carries two important notes. The first is that spiritual motherhood is a role for every woman whether she has a physical child or whether her motherhood is directed more broadly as a profession or to the world. The second is that the role of mother is to serve the weak in the created world — to succor and to develop and to nourish and to educate the weak and the frail and the vulnerable and the ignorant. In regard to the first — the broader notion of motherhood — she sees the practice of the professions as different for men and women. And she does, as did Edith Stein, see the possibility of women in almost any profession. While the competencies are the same the manner of accomplishing them is different. She says,

[F]or a woman to be a physician, a guardian, a teacher, a nurse, is not a profession in the masculine sense of the word, but it is a form of spiritual motherhood. ... The professions of women will consequently not be the substitute for a failing motherhood, but rather the working out of the never failing motherliness that is in every genuine woman (TEW, 86-87).

Surprisingly ... or perhaps not ... Le Fort in this early twentieth century work addressed the

question of priesthood for woman ... and her answer is consistent with her text. Women cannot be priests. She says, "the very meaning of woman in the church would have been annihilated" (TEW, 101).

In regard to the role of mother she warns against a selfishness that sees the child ... or the project ... or the profession as an extension of the self of the mother ... my child ... my way ... my practice ... my ministry to be formed according to my wishes. To continue the analogy of the child, woman must remember that her child comes from God and she must facilitate the return of her child to God. And Le Fort warns that part of the destiny of every mother is that her heart will be pierced by her child. It was so with Mary and her child, and it will be so with us. A deeper pondering of even the joyful mysteries of the rosary reveals Mary's hidden trials as well as her joy. She heard her child say, "What have I to do with you?" And as she watched her son die, she heard him give her a mission in the world.

How then does Le Fort understand the role of woman — a role arising from her metaphysical constitution — timeless woman as bridal and maternal — in the Church and in the world? Woman is the carrier of spirituality; she situates the person in relationship to God. Woman is the giver of life; Le Fort says, "a culture that has become incapable of life dies no natural death; it strangles." Woman's mission is Mary's mission — the conscious appropriation of the role of handmaid of the Lord. Woman's life is the domain of the religious; it is the deep power within the church and the deep power within the world that carries a reminder of the transitory nature of this world and of the finitude of the creature ... and without which the order of the world is no more. Her mission is most often a hidden one — in the recesses of family life or, as it has often been in the past, the mission of women in consecrated life whose care of children through their education and of the sick through their hospital ministry joined with a life of prayer gave heroic witness to the bridal and maternal roles of woman. It is only extraordinary circumstances that demand of woman a more public role and the exercise of earthly power. Nonetheless when the more public role is demanded of her it must be performed as woman. And when the circumstance passes so too does this role pass.

III. Conclusion

As I turn to the contemporary era I want to return to Le Fort's *The Last at the Scaffold* and examine a passage therein. There the correspondent who recounts the story of Blanche and the other sisters of the Carmelite Convent writes this of the perception of a possible threat to the convent:

[A]t that time there was no possible reason to believe in the possibility of martyrdom. After all the threats of an individual official were only a breach of manners in keeping with the impudence of the people. There were certain difficulties and limitations to be faced, perhaps a temporary dissolution of the order. But there was no dreadful issue at hand. Was it not a gross misinterpretation to accuse these humane times of bloodthirstiness? And was it not a little absurd to credit them with the awful crime of hating God, when in reality everyone was busy mouthing philosophical phrases and discussing pressing questions of state finance? At that time

we did not think of subsequent developments. So heroism was really an extravagant figment of the fancy and as out of place as fear (*The Last at the Scaffold*, 48).

What now of our own time? Are there any distinguishing marks of our own culture that should give us pause? Or have we been lulled into complacency and inaction by heeding those who deride the very notion that the enshrinement of unfettered liberty has resulted in a culture of death and in that belief relaxed our vigilance? There are some marks and forces of our culture that should give us pause and among them are: (1) a particular post modern philosophy — marked by a contemporary millenarianism that has bought into the Enlightenment myth of perpetual human progress by human power alone; (2) a contemporary scientism made more powerful by the tools of modern technology whose manipulations — whether at the beginning or the end of life — promise that only the planned, the perfect, the privileged and the productive may have a place in society; (3) an ethics and a legal theory that enshrines individualism, and gives standing and rights only to those who are presently capable of claiming autonomy and which misunderstands natural social institutions as social conventions; (4) a particular kind of feminism that in claiming a radical egalitarianism of woman and man would make herself into a man and which so disdains the woman as mother that she would kill her child before it is born and press for laws to protect her right and the right of other woman to that killing; (5) a particular kind of force — the coercion of political power, the coercion of the sophisticated elites, and the coercion of the culture which has embraced death as a solution to human problems; and finally the subtle pressure of confusion — confusion sown by the failure of the institutions of power and individuals of privileged position to speak and to witness the truth.

Let me conclude with Le Fort's own conclusion. She says,

As the renewal of culture depends on whether the other half of reality, the woman's countenance, becomes visible in the face of the creative man, so the true salvation of the world depends on whether Mary's features grow visible in his face.

Woman's mission, winging far beyond the woman herself, touches the mystery of the world (TEW, 107-08).

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SECTION 6
REMEMBERING
RESISTANCE TO COMMUNISM

ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN

HOW AND WHY HE CHOSE TO REMEMBER

■
BY DOUGLAS KRIES

Upon first reading the announcement of this conference, my attention was quickly drawn to the subtitle — “what we choose to remember” — and my thoughts turned immediately to a particularly poignant passage in Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. In the passage, Solzhenitsyn apostrophizes the innocents recently arrested and sentenced to the labor camps. They are boarding the awful trains that will take them into the bowels of the gulag and, like all travelers, they want to take some of their belongings with them. What Solzhenitsyn counsels instead is that they surrender all their property — it will be taken from them anyway — and instead turn to memory:

Own only what you can always carry with you: know languages, know countries, know people. Let your memory be your travel bag. Use your memory! Use your memory! It is those bitter seeds alone which might sprout and grow someday.

Look around you — there are people around you. Maybe you will remember one of them all your life and later eat your heart out because you didn't make use of the opportunity to ask him questions. And the less you talk, the more you'll hear. Thin strands of human lives stretch from island to island of the Archipelago. They intertwine, touch one another for one night only in just such a clickety-clack-ing half-dark car as this and then separate once and for all (2.1.158).¹

Above all else, Solzhenitsyn understood himself as one whose task it was to be a certain sort of rememberer — perhaps even to be an historian almost in the grand manner of an Herodotus or Thucydides. Indeed, from a very young age, Solzhenitsyn thought the main task of his life was to write a history of the Russian revolution; this turned into a massive project he eventually finished late in life as *The Red Wheel*. Yet he is most remembered today for the memories he struggled to record in *The Gulag Archipelago*, and it is in this work that he speaks most intensely and passionately about the importance of the very act of remembering. Since grappling with the cataclysmic events accompanying the emergence of twentieth century European totalitarianism is the theme of our reflections, the purpose of the present essay will be first to consider the question of *how* Solzhenitsyn used memory to write *The Gulag Archipelago* and, second, to ask *why* he thought that remembering the gulag was so worthy. Finally, given our particular focus on the affairs of the Jewish people during this turbulent period, the essay will show how Solzhenitsyn's emphasis on the significance of remembering returns in his last major work, *Two Hundred Years Together*, which is a history of the Jewish people in Russia.

I. How Solzhenitsyn remembered the Gulag

During his years in *katonga* or hard labor in Kazakhstan, Solzhenitsyn began to reflect profoundly on his situation and its meaning. Since he could have no access to paper or pencil,

the only way to preserve his reflections was through memory, and so he returned to the ancient method of remembering by reducing his reflections to verse:

Memory was the only hidey-hole in which you could keep what you had written and carry it through all the searches and journeys under escort. In the early days I had little confidence in the powers of memory and decided therefore to write in verse. It was of course an abuse of the genre. I discovered later that prose, too, can be quite satisfactorily tamped down into the deep hidden layers of what we carry in our head. No longer burdened with frivolous and superfluous knowledge, a prisoner's memory is astonishingly capacious, and can expand indefinitely. We have too little faith in memory! (5.5.356).

Solzhenitsyn says that he began to memorize his poetry with the aid of matchsticks, some representing individual and some tenth lines of his poem. Then the Catholic Lithuanians showed up in camp and began stringing rosaries for themselves with little beads made of compressed and dried bread or other materials. Solzhenitsyn asked them for a unique 'rosary' with special tenth, fiftieth, and hundredth beads. The string of beads could be hidden in his mittens, and even if discovered, the guards would not know of its use. By the end of his sentence, Solzhenitsyn says that he had memorized 12,000 lines of poetry. He would go through the entire poem every month, being especially careful to make sure that the fiftieth and one hundredth lines came up properly in the sequence (5.5.356-7).²

Unlike many, Solzhenitsyn somehow survived his time in the labor camps and then was released into "perpetual exile" in Kazakhstan. He quickly used his beads to help him write out his poem and then secretly began to turn these and other memories into various works of historical literature. Not long after the death of Stalin he was declared "rehabilitated" and was able to return to Russia where, in 1958, he began working on *The Gulag Archipelago*. He says that he soon considered abandoning the project, for his own mnemonic experiences were insufficient for the historical project he had in mind. He needed sources; he needed many more memories than he was able to glean from his personal beads.

The prospects for completing *Archipelago* changed dramatically and almost overnight with the publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* in 1962. Khrushchev had created a moment wherein he was able to criticize Stalin's excesses and his departure from the principles of Lenin; this made it possible for *One Day*, which could likewise be read as a criticism of Stalin's excesses, to be published in the literary journal *Novy Mir*. Not only did *One Day* make Solzhenitsyn famous, but letters from former camp inmates began to be sent to him. Solzhenitsyn says that he was able to consult thereby the reports and memories of 227 of these former *zeks* or prisoners (7.1.451-3). He decided to revive work on *Archipelago*.

A third source of materials for the planned history of the gulag should also be mentioned briefly, namely, the few writings compiled by others that Solzhenitsyn was able to obtain, often surreptitiously. These were not extensive in number; Solzhenitsyn seems to have used especially Shalamov's work on the Kolyma River and Vitkovsky's work on the Solovetsky Islands, among others (author's note, xxiv). He indicates, too, that the sudden and unexpected availability of the Soviet penal code was another written source that helped him write *Archipelago* (1.3.57).³

It is an understatement to say that it is remarkable that Solzhenitsyn was able to turn these meager sources — his personal memories, the recollections of other former camp inmates, and a handful of other writings — into an 1800 page history of the gulag from 1918-1956. Yet it would be a mistake to think that Solzhenitsyn was completely satisfied with *Archipelago*. He cites within the work itself two important inadequacies. First, he complains about the book's "jerkiness," which he states is in part because of the difficult circumstances in which it was written. The small window of openness that had made it possible for *One Day* to be published closed very quickly. Besides, *Archipelago* was a much more dangerous book than *One Day*, for the latter spoke of problems that Khrushchev could use in his delicate critique of Stalin, whereas the former, beginning with the year 1918, argued unequivocally that the crimes and abuses of the Soviet labor camp system were set in motion, and indeed practiced, by Lenin himself. Solzhenitsyn was also aware that the KGB was watching him very closely. As a result, he was not able to risk keeping the parts of the work together in a single location. Indeed, prior to publication, Solzhenitsyn had never seen the entire manuscript assembled. This resulted, he writes in the postscripts, in a set of memories that is marked by its unevenness or jerkiness (469-70, 471).⁴

A second problem with the book that Solzhenitsyn himself cites is that *Archipelago*, despite its 1800 pages, is not finished. He gives three reasons for this, the first being that he recognizes that he did not have and could not hope to obtain all of the official documents and sources he needed to write such a book (3.3.198; cf. xxii); indeed, toward the end of the chapter "The Fingers of Aurora," in which he is trying to write the history of the beginning of the camps, Solzhenitsyn the historian almost seems desperate: "This whole dawn of the camps deserves to have its spectrum examined much more closely. And glory to him who can — for all I have in my own hands is crumbs" (3.1.180). Another reason for the unfinished character of *Archipelago* is that Solzhenitsyn realized that he was spending much more of his life — about ten years — working on it than he had ever intended, and he felt he simply must turn his attention to his life's principal task, *The Red Wheel*. A third reason is that the KGB had forced Solzhenitsyn's hand and made it necessary to publish the work before it was completely ready. As a result of intensive surveillance and interrogation techniques, the KGB had obtained a copy of *Archipelago* from one of the assistants who had been helping Solzhenitsyn with his clandestine writing. Once the copy was seized, Solzhenitsyn thought he had no choice but to publish the work in the West without further revision; a microfilm copy of the unfinished book had fortunately already been smuggled out of the country, and thus the precious collection of memories that Solzhenitsyn had amassed was preserved.

II. *Why Solzhenitsyn Remembered the Gulag*

Given the difficulty of merely collecting the memories of those who were incarcerated in the gulag system, and given the obstacles from the Soviet authorities to writing down such memories as a work of literature, one cannot help wondering *why* Solzhenitsyn did it. There are at least three possible answers that immediately spring to mind but that must likewise be imme-

diately rejected.

First, although the book, as has already been noted, had its inception in Solzhenitsyn's own memories, and although some of the most memorable chapters of the work, such as "Ascent" (4.1), include detailed discussions of his own story, Solzhenitsyn states bluntly early on in *Archipelago*, "This is not going to be a volume of memoirs about my own life" (1.1.15). Since the work obviously includes personal memories as well as profound reflections on those memories, what the author must mean with this statement is that the book will not be primarily about himself, or that it will be about much more than himself.

Second, while the book is probably the most important political exposé ever written, Solzhenitsyn also says quite bluntly, "[L]et the reader who expects this book to be a political exposé slam its covers shut right now" (1.4.75). Obviously Solzhenitsyn wants the crimes of the Soviets to be exposed, and there is no denying but that, despite his best efforts, Solzhenitsyn is sometimes intensely angry at the Soviet authorities. It is also clearly the case that he knew that publishing the book in France, in the West, would mean that it would be read as a political exposé. But that, again, does not seem to be *why* Solzhenitsyn wrote the book, or at least it is not the main reason why he wrote it.

Third, Solzhenitsyn does *not* say that he wrote the book "so that it will never happen again," as the tired cliché puts it. Although the title of the work, *Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956*, implies that the book will stop at 1956, Solzhenitsyn says in the work's final pages, composed as late as 1968, that he knows that the gulag of Lenin and Stalin can indeed happen again — in fact, he knows that the gulag is still operating (7.1.452-3; cf. 5.3.347; xxii). On a more fundamental level, though, it is clear that one of the principal lessons of *Archipelago* is Solzhenitsyn's assertion that the dividing line between good and bad runs through every human heart rather than between those human beings who are good and those who are evil: "If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being" (1.4.75; cf. 4.1.312). If this is so, the dividing line between good and evil is not an 'us vs. them' dividing line, and so evil cannot be isolated, but is rather a permanent feature of humanity and hence of human history. And hence, 'it' — evil — can indeed happen again.

A more plausible explanation of why Solzhenitsyn pursued the memories of the *Archipelago* against almost insurmountable obstacles is that, after all, he was an historian. It was his task or calling to remember and explain the past, and so, one might reasonably say, the goal of *Archipelago* is to provide a history or chronicle of the gulag. Indeed, as just noted, the book's very title includes a range of years (1918-1956), just as one might expect for a history book. Also, at one point in *Archipelago*, the author does say that before the publication of *One Day*, he had been thinking of himself as "the chronicler of the Archipelago" (7.1.451); at another point he refers to "the whole long history of the Archipelago" (3.3.198); and at a third he speaks of a part of *Archipelago* as his "history of courts and trials" (1.11.131). One must be

cautious about such statements, however, because Solzhenitsyn also speaks of his attempted history as “this home-grown, homemade book” (3.3.198); at another point he refers to the history in his book as “narrow” (1.11.131); and finally, he states bluntly in the preface, “I would not be so bold as to try to write the history of the Archipelago” (xxii).⁵ Probably the best interpretation of the historical nature of *Archipelago* is that Solzhenitsyn desired to write a suitable history of the gulag but was frustrated in his attempt by his inability to examine all the documents and sources necessary for such a task.⁶

To say that the reason why Solzhenitsyn wanted to preserve memories of the gulag was in order to write history, moreover, is only to push the question back one step: why does one want to write that ambiguous thing called “history” anyway? There can be no doubt but that one of the reasons why Solzhenitsyn wanted to write a history of the gulag was to offer a literary memorial to those who suffered and died in the camps and who had no one else to write on their behalf. The dedication to *Archipelago* says as much: “I dedicate this to all those who did not live to tell it. And may they please forgive me for not having seen it all nor remembered it all, for not having divined all of it.” In the “Author’s Note” at the beginning of the work, he likewise states, “This is our common, collective monument to all those who were tortured and murdered” (xxiii). At another place he says that he never expects to see the work published in his lifetime, but that he continues to work anyway, since “I am writing this book solely from a sense of obligation because too many stories and recollections have accumulated in my hands and I cannot allow them to perish” (3.7.228). He echoes this sentiment in the “afterword” to *Archipelago*, speaking more directly about the zeks who, after the publication of *One Day*, had sent him their memories in letters: “As soon as I began the book, I thought of abandoning it. ... But when, in addition to what I had collected, prisoners’ letters converged on me from all over the country, I realized that since all this had been given to me, I had a duty” (469).

Thus, to offer a literary memorial to the inmates of the camps is surely one reason why Solzhenitsyn attempted a history of the gulag. Nevertheless, there are also several passages within the text in which the author indicates the importance of *Archipelago* for Russians who were not in the camps — indeed even for Russians who either perpetrated the crimes associated with the camps or at least knew of them and stood by without protesting. On repeated occasions he vehemently criticizes the attitude of those Russians who want to avoid digging up the past and thereby examining with open eyes the history of evil in their midst.⁷ If we may refer to the first reason for writing the history of the gulag as “history as literary memorial,” we may refer to this second reason as “history as preparation for repentance.”

In a striking passage in the conclusion to the famous chapter on “The Bluecaps,” Solzhenitsyn compares the reports he has in 1966 of the prosecution of 86,000 former Nazi criminals in what was then “West Germany” with the failure of the Russians to prosecute anyone at all for crimes associated with the gulag. There he speaks quite passionately of the advantage for a nation such as Germany to confront its dark memories directly:

In the German trials an astonishing phenomenon takes place from time to time. The defendant clasps his head in his hands, refuses to make any defense, and from

then on asks no concessions from the court. He says that the presentation of his crimes, revived and once again confronting him, has filled him with revulsion and he no longer wants to live.

That is the ultimate height a trial can attain: when evil is so utterly condemned that even the criminal is revolted by it.

A country which has condemned evil 86,000 times from the rostrum of a court and irrevocably condemned it in literature and among its young people, year by year, step by step, is purged of it.

What are we to do? Someday our descendants will describe our several generations as generations of driveling do-nothings. ...

What are we to do if the great Russian tradition of penitence is incomprehensible and absurd to them? ...

In keeping silent about evil, in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are *implanting* it, and it will rise up a thousandfold in the future (1.4.80-81).

This reference in *Archipelago* to the great Russian tradition of penitence was repeated and expanded upon in Solzhenitsyn's subsequent essay titled "Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations," which was published in 1974 in the collection *From under the Rubble*.⁸ In this powerful essay, of which Ericson and Klimoff state that "Nowhere are the Christian foundations of his thought set forth more explicitly,"⁹ Solzhenitsyn explains that, "In the distant past ... Russia was so rich in penitential movements that repentance was among the most prominent Russian national characteristics. ... The chronicles and ancient Russian literature alike abound in examples of repentance." He again contrasts the achievements of the West Germans, who had recently followed "a powerful movement of repentance," with the inability of the contemporary Russians to follow suit, yet he seems hopeful that Russians might still find it within themselves to remember their Soviet history and to confront it squarely. "This article," he says, "is written with faith in the natural proclivity of Russians to repent, in our ability even as things are now to find the penitential impulse in ourselves and set the whole world an example."¹⁰

If we take such words seriously, it would seem that the most all-encompassing, most far-reaching reason for writing *Archipelago* would be Solzhenitsyn's desire to offer a history that would serve as a sort of examination of conscience in preparation for repentance, first and most immediately for the Russian people, and then for all human beings.¹¹ This seems to be the highest and most important purpose of memory for Solzhenitsyn, and particularly of his remembering in *The Gulag Archipelago*.

III. Solzhenitsyn on 'Jews among the Bolsheviks'

Solzhenitsyn occasionally refers to Jews in *The Gulag Archipelago*, but not as a sustained theme. He discusses, for example, the ex-Jew Kornfeld, who played an important part in Solzhenitsyn's own conversion to Christianity (4.1.309-311); he also speaks about the ethnic Jew Fraenkel, who proposed to Stalin a dramatic expansion of the labor camp system (3.3.196). He thinks it probable that, toward the end of his life, Stalin was planning "a great massacre of

the Jews" (1.2.37) and suggests frequently that some of the Nazis's methods of dealing with Jews were learned from the Bolshevik's methods of "dekulakization."¹² Still, such references to the Jewish people in *Archipelago* are scattered and unsystematic.

In 2001-2002, however, the elderly Solzhenitsyn surprised many by publishing two lengthy volumes on the history of the Russian Jews titled *Two Hundred Years Together*.¹³ In the introduction to this work, which would be his last major undertaking, Solzhenitsyn says that as he was writing *The Red Wheel*, the task that had occupied him for approximately fifty years, he repeatedly encountered the question of the role played by Jews in the Russian revolution. He says that he set the matter aside in that massive work, and that he would prefer not to engage the question of Russian Jewry directly at all, for the topic is obviously exceedingly controversial. Yet he also says that it is precisely someone such as himself, rather than extremists, who should address such a delicate issue. "For many years," he writes in introducing *Two Hundred Years*, "I postponed this work and would still now be pleased to avert the burden of writing it. But my years are nearing their end, and I feel I must take up this task."¹⁴

As their title suggests, the volumes cover two hundred years of the history of the Jewish people in Russia. Included is a substantial chapter on that part of the Holocaust that occurred in Soviet territories after the Nazi invasion, especially at Babi Yar near Kiev.¹⁵ For our purposes, though, the crucial question of the work is the nature and extent of the role played by Jews in the catastrophe that was the Bolshevik revolution, a question that is addressed especially in a chapter called "Among the Bolsheviks."

Solzhenitsyn sifts the historical evidence carefully and considers the matter with acumen and impartiality; his conclusion, stated simply, is that Jewish participation in the Bolshevik revolution itself was important but not determinative, whereas Jewish participation was more extensive and sometimes crucial in the years following. He repeats clearly in *Two Hundred Years* what he had already said in *Archipelago*, namely, that the Russian people were responsible for the disaster that was the revolution and that they were to be held accountable; he adds in *Two Hundred Years* that they were in addition responsible for various pogroms against Jews living in Russia. In *Two Hundred Years*, however, Solzhenitsyn also states clearly that the participation of the Jews in Bolshevism was widespread and even, at some moments, disproportionate, and that hence Russian Jewry is in some sense responsible for its share of the revolutionary catastrophe. Daniel Mahoney summarizes the conclusion of this challenging chapter of *Two Hundred Years* well:

Solzhenitsyn speaks difficult truths about the necessity for mutual repentance on the part of both communities. He insists that there can be no escape from the moral obligation to honestly and openly confront the collaboration of whole segments of Russian and Jewish society with an essentially totalitarian and terroristic regime. There are perfectly comprehensible reasons, Solzhenitsyn makes clear, why Jews ... embraced the cause of Bolshevism. But Jews need to move beyond a merely defensive mode of justification in regard to their co-religionists who served as "revolutionary assassins" under the Leninist regime. And the same can be said

for those Russian nationalists who blame everyone except the Russian people for the criminal misdeeds of the Soviet regime.¹⁶

The main question for both Russians and Jews, Solzhenitsyn suggests in “Among the Bolsheviks,” is whether a people — any people — is responsible for its “renegades.” In answering this question, he returns to his emphasis upon the significance of memory: “Should a people remember its renegades or not; should it preserve a memory of the fiends and demons that it engendered? The answer to that last question should surely not be in doubt: *We must remember*. Every people must remember them as *its own*; there is simply no other way.”¹⁷

Like all peoples, then, the Jews of Russia must remember their renegades and accept a certain responsibility for them. Responsibility is not at all the same as collective guilt for Solzhenitsyn, but he does think that all peoples must in some way answer for their disgraced members:

Indeed, there are many explanations as to why Jews joined the Bolsheviks.

Nevertheless, if Russian Jews' memory of this period continues seeking primarily to *justify* this involvement, then the level of Jewish self-awareness will be lowered, even lost. ... [E]very people must answer morally for all of its past — including that past which is shameful. Answer by what means? By attempting to *comprehend*: How could such a thing have been allowed? Where in all this is *our* error? And could it happen again?

It is in that spirit, specifically, that it would behoove the Jewish people to answer, both for the revolutionary cutthroats and the ranks willing to serve them. Not to answer before other peoples, but to oneself, to one's consciousness, and before God. Just as we Russians must answer.¹⁸

Solzhenitsyn does not use the word “repentance” in this passage from *Two Hundred Years*, but it seems that this “answering” that he discusses is not far from what he had called “repentance” in “Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations” and in *Archipelago*. If this is so, however, it becomes clear that the answer to the question of *why* Solzhenitsyn remembered in *The Gulag Archipelago* — not to mention the answer to the question of *why* he wrote *Two Hundred Years Together* — is to provide peoples, and especially Russians and Jews, with the opportunity of an examination of conscience in preparation for repentance.

IV. Conclusion

Solzhenitsyn's idea of a people bearing a common responsibility for the actions of “a few bad apples” or, to use his term, “renegades,” is an idea that is hard for modern men and women to accept. Indeed, it would strike many as absurd on its face. In the United States, to consider one obvious example, the basis of political agency is citizenship, but citizenship has relatively little to do with one's ethnic roots. *The Declaration of Independence* does not appeal to the ethnic, religious, cultural, or linguistic origins of the Americans, but insists instead upon the natural rights belonging to all human beings, irrespective of their ethnic, religious, or linguistic origins. Modern secular liberal democracy does not give serious consideration to our membership in this or that people, but considers us only as individuals whose specific histories are

not especially relevant. We are not opposed to making human beings answer for their misdeeds, but they should be forced to answer as individuals, as isolable moral and political agents who speak only for themselves.

Solzhenitsyn's understanding of a "people" as a communal entity bound together by ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural ties is much more robust than we are accustomed. He goes so far as to say that a people must answer for its renegades "just as we would answer for members of our own family." Yet even such an appeal to family does not lend much force to his argument in the eyes of many in the western democracies today, for we do not usually think that we must answer for the misdeeds of the members of our families. Certainly we do not think that we should or even can repent for them. Nevertheless, Solzhenitsyn concludes the chapter of *Two Hundred Years* that we have been considering by claiming, "[I]f we release ourselves from any responsibility for the actions of our national kin, the very concept of a *people* loses any real meaning."¹⁹ Solzhenitsyn's assertion that a communal choosing to remember is the key to the formation of a people, to its faring and living well, therefore presents not only Russian Christians and Russian Jews with a great challenge, but non-Russian modern peoples as well. Whether any of us will have the moral courage to profit from this challenge remains to be seen, but it is worth ending this essay with the thought that Solzhenitsyn understood himself to be writing from the posture of hope.²⁰

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¹ *The Gulag Archipelago* was originally translated into English in three large volumes by Thomas P. Whitney and Harry Willets (Harper and Row, 1973-1978). With Solzhenitsyn's blessing, Edward Ericson, Jr., later published a one-volume abridgement of this translation. Ericson's abridgment, however, also includes some passages that were once excised from the Russian text but were later restored (Harper and Row, 1985). Since this abridgement has become the standard means for English readers to approach the work, and since all quotations used in this essay are found in the abridgment, it seems best to give references to the work in parentheses in the text with numbers that refer to the part and chapter of the work followed by the page number of the Ericson abridgment. Thus, 4.1.311 would mean part 4, chapter 1, and page 311 of the Ericson abridgment. A fuller account of the English publication of the work is available in Edward E. Ericson, Jr., and Alexis Klimoff, *The Soul and Barbed Wire: An Introduction to Solzhenitsyn* (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2008), 113-114.

² A few lines of this poetry were used by Solzhenitsyn in the *Gulag Archipelago* itself; see, e.g. 4.1.311-12. Other selections have been translated and published in *The Solzhenitsyn Reader: New and Essential Writings, 1947-2005*, edited by Edward E. Ericson, Jr., and Daniel J. Mahoney (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2006). Solzhenitsyn also managed to remember a few lines of his fellow zek poet Anatoly Vasilyevich Silin, whose story and poetry he recounts in 5.5.357-59.

³ He also speaks sarcastically of the works on the camp labor system produced by Soviet propagandists at 3.3.198-201.

⁴ Nevertheless, the more one studies the structure of *Archipelago*, the more one realizes that it is more carefully organized and structured than first meets the eye.

⁵ Also to be considered is that Solzhenitsyn's subtitle for *Archipelago* does not use the word "history" but rather the phrase *An Experiment in Literary Investigation*.

⁶ The sort of research that Solzhenitsyn presumably wanted to do for *Archipelago* has been more fully accomplished by Nicolas Werth in "A State against Its People: Violence, Repression, and Terror in the Soviet Union," in *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Mark Kramer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁷ See, e.g., 7.1.453; 3.8.237; and 1.3.40.

⁸ *From Under the Rubble* was translated into English under the direction of Michael Scammell (Little, Brown, and Co.,

1975); "Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations" has been reprinted in *The Solzhenitsyn Reader*, 527-55.

⁹ *The Soul and Barbed Wire*, 121.

¹⁰ "Repentance and Self-Limitation" 3, in *Solzhenitsyn Reader*, 534-35.

¹¹ Indeed, there are passages in *Archipelago* in which Solzhenitsyn himself almost repents for things he did not do; at the very least, he applies Socrates' dictum of "know thyself" to himself, and understands it to mean that he himself is quite capable of serious evil; cf. 1.4.73-74; 4.1.313.

¹² 1.2.26; 5.1.342; 6.2.429. However, at 5.3.346, Solzhenitsyn claims that the Soviets learned about the practice of assigning numbers to prisoners from the Nazis.

¹³ The volumes have been translated into French and German; selections have been translated into English by Alexis Klimoff and Stephan Solzhenitsyn and published in *The Solzhenitsyn Reader*. Judicious review essays on each of the two volumes and the reaction to them have been offered by Daniel J. Mahoney; see "Solzhenitsyn on Russia's 'Jewish Question,'" *Society* 40.1 (2002): 104-109; "Solzhenitsyn, Russia, and the Jews Revisited," *Society* 41.5 (2004): 72-82. The latter essay was revised and expanded as "Soljénitsyne, la Russie, et les Juifs: Vers un jugement impartial et une compréhension mutuelle," *Commentaire* 105 (2004): 243-254.

¹⁴ "Introduction" to *Two Hundred Years*, in *Solzhenitsyn Reader*, 489.

¹⁵ See the discussion of Mahoney in "Solzhenitsyn, Russia, and the Jews Revisited," 79-80.

¹⁶ Mahoney, "Solzhenitsyn, Russia, and the Jews Revisited," 78.

¹⁷ *Two Hundred Years* 2.15, in *Solzhenitsyn Reader*, 498-99; here and in all other quotations, the italics are in the original.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 504-05.

¹⁹ *Two Hundred Years* 2.15, 505.

²⁰ It seems appropriate to acknowledge that the conference for which this paper was originally prepared was held in Oregon in 2010 — the 35 year anniversary of a visit the exiled Solzhenitsyn made to a community of Russian "Old Believers" in Oregon in 1975.

SECTION 7
REMEMBERING
THE INFLUENCE OF IDEOLOGY

CONFLICTS FROM THE PAST; LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT

DR. ALICE VON PLATEN V.

DR. KARL BRANDT



BY PETER M. CARNEY

Introduction

In *Conflicts from the Past* Hitler's personal physician Dr. Karl Brandt defends himself in a manner that could have come from a Greek tragedy.¹ When charged with responsibility for following Hitler's order to kill the mentally ill Dr. Brandt supported himself by saying,

My practice as a doctor remains incomprehensible for the individual who limits himself to the consideration of it in an isolated manner. The meaning must be sought in greater depth; here it is Society which is in question. If I am at fault because of it I take responsibility in ITS name.²

The psychiatrist, Countess Dr. Alice von Platen, in the preface to the 1948 edition of her book, *The Killing of the Mentally Ill in Germany* responded as Sophocles' heroine Antigone might: "It is certain that a single murder will provoke hundreds more if one has not renounced to its very depths the ideology that produced the killing."³ May the conflicts from the past provide lessons for the present by helping us to answer this critical question: "How can people, made in the image of God, develop the courage and the wisdom to effectively acknowledge and change the evil and immoral impulses and desires that lie within themselves?" Since all of us, including this author, should daily address this question, let us in this discussion look at three recent scientific views regarding the effects of evil on humans. The first is taken from psychology; the second from a theory of brain development; and the third from an analogy to retroviruses.

Recent Scientific Views

A. The Shadow of Carl Jung. The twentieth century psychologist, Carl Jung taught that: "Unfortunately there can be no doubt that man is, on the whole, less good than he imagines himself or wants to be. Everyone carries a shadow and the less it is embodied in the individual's consciousness the blacker and denser it is. At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well meant intentions."⁴ M. Esther Harding notes that if

[O]ne represses the shadow, allowing it to fall into the underworld of the unconsciousness, all the devilish evil of the nether darkness can find its way into one's life without arousing awareness or suspicion in oneself, though to others the diabolical effect one produces may be exceedingly obvious. ... This threat is such a menace to the conscious personality that we go to all lengths to prevent ourselves from becoming aware of our shadow, perhaps because we sense that this terrible evil lies in the background. We do not realize that our best defense against such an invasion is to accept what belongs to our individuality, so developing a strong con-

scious attitude to set against the forces of the unconscious. Instead, we ignore the shadow within us, leaving the door open for a further invasion.⁵

B. The Triune Theory of the Human Brain. This theory represents a model of the human brain as being made up of three parts each of which functions independently and in conjunction with each other and each of which has the temporal capacity to control the other. The Triune Theory⁶ has the beauty of simplicity, yet comparative evolutionary neuro-anatomists find this theory lacking in scientific verification. Neurobehavioral evidence that shows that many animal forms, from invertebrates upward, have the intelligence to learn and to use tools.⁷ This biological/scientific concept of the development of intelligence contrasts with claims that “Man is made in the image of God.”⁸ Thus the conflict between Dr. Brandt and Dr. von Platen represents in one sense a conflict between the concept that man is just another medical/biological object and the concept that man “is created in the image of God.”

C. Perverse Retroviruses. Dr. Edmund Pellegrino, Chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics, notes that “the oppressive threats and resultant fears of tyrannical rule and war are like perverse retroviruses. They transform moral DNA so drastically that what in peace is unthinkable becomes permissible and even mandatory for some.”⁹ Yet “tyrannical rule and war” are but outward manifestations of the much more common retroviruses of greed, anger, arrogance and ignorance that have always afflicted mankind. The ancients called these perverse retroviruses “poisons” and used the antidotes of generosity for greed, compassion for anger, humility for arrogance and wisdom for ignorance. Would that we moderns now had the courage and wisdom to utilize these antidotes effectively.

The Conflict

On a cold and dreary December 9, 1946, in the bombed out city of Nuremberg the trial officially known as *The United States of America v. Karl Brandt, et al* began. Also known as The Doctors' Trial, Karl Brandt and twenty-two others were charged with four criminal counts. Present at this historic proceeding was a young doctor, formerly the Countess von Platen, who had spent the war as a physician in rural Bavaria and Austria. After the war she became an assistant at Professor Viktor von Weizsacker's psychosomatic clinic at the University of Heidelberg.¹⁰ Weizsacker had recommended that Dr. von Platen be a part of a group of German physicians who would observe the proceedings of the trial. Thus, in a small way, the conflict described in this paper lays between the powerful Dr. Brandt and a young psychiatrist in training, Dr. von Platen.

But in a larger sense the conflict has deeper roots which continue to manifest themselves today. In 1859 Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection — The Preservation of the Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*.¹¹ Interested in the deeper meaning of this book Sir Francis Galton, Darwin's half cousin, explored the role of heredity in developing genius and in 1883 developed the theory of eugenics.¹² In 1904 he defined eugenics as “the science that deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race.”¹³ Leaders of many nations and many divergent political points of view embraced eugenics as a

way to improve humanity by “selective breeding” as though humans were not very different from cattle or other livestock. Only G.K. Chesterton spoke out against eugenics. In his book *Eugenics and Other Evils*, which was started in 1910 and finally published in 1922, Chesterton wrote:

There exists today a scheme of action, a school of thought ... called Eugenics ... that ... ought to be destroyed. ... I know that it numbers many disciples whose intentions are entirely innocent and humane; and would be sincerely astonished at my describing it as I do. But that is only because evil always wins through the strength of its splendid dupes; and there has in all ages been a disastrous alliance between abnormal innocence and abnormal evil.¹⁴

Reading the words of Chesterton published in 1922 and looking at what happened in Germany from 1925 through 1945, I cry at the lost opportunity Chesterton offered to the world and marvel at his remarkable insight into human nature.

The Doctors' Trial lasted from December 9, 1946 until August 20, 1947. There were 140 days of testimony with over 85 witnesses and 1500 documents. Brandt and six others were condemned to death by hanging. Nine were sentenced to terms of from fifteen years to life in prison and seven found not guilty.¹⁵ Brandt is said to have corresponded during the trial with Dr. von Platen who described Brandt as “sentimental, naïve and immature” in his admiration of Hitler.¹⁶

Starting in 1946 Dr. Alice von Platen, a member of the small German delegation of medical observers at the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial, worked with its director, Dr. Alexander Mitscherlich, and, as well, with a medical student — Fred Mielke. Dr. Mitscherlich was a psychiatrist and an historian; he had worked as a journalist; and he had been imprisoned by the Nazis. The delegation faced great pressure from the German medical establishment to side with the defendants. When the delegation did not, the medical establishment vengefully made sure that none of the delegates would have a medical career in Germany. After the trial, Dr. Mitscherlich wrote *Medicine without Humanity*. Dr. von Platen wrote *The Killing of the Mentally Ill in Germany*. Both books failed to reach bookstores and the doctors were called *Nestbeschmutzer*, i.e. “a bird that defiles its own nest” by many German physicians.^{10, 17}

The Protagonists

Dr. Karl Brandt and Dr. Alice von Platen were both physicians trained in the art of medicine; both were Germans; and both lived at the same time having been born within six years of each other. Yet both came to diametrically opposed ways of practicing their profession and living their own lives.

A. Karl Brandt: Born on January 8, 1904, Brandt became a doctor in 1928. From the time of his birth until the time he became a physician Germany went from being one of the greatest powers in the world to being a defeated nation saddled with great debt, social upheaval, and a weak and ineffective democratically elected government. During this time he was exposed to powerful debates on how to restore Germany to its greatness. In 1932 Brandt joined the Nazi

Party and in 1933 was summoned to Upper Bavaria to treat Wilhelm Buckner, Hitler's adjutant, who had been injured in a road traffic accident. Brandt deeply impressed Hitler who invited him to become the Fuhrer's "escort physician." From 1934 onward, Brandt was part of Hitler's inner circle and as such had direct, daily access to the thinking of this man. After the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Hitler put Dr. Brandt in charge of the T4 Program responsible for the killing of the mentally ill. In recognition of his work — from 1939 forward — Brandt received regular promotions. In 1943, was made a Major General. Throughout this time he felt that he was both helping patients and his country. At his trial Brandt justified his actions thusly,

Would you believe that it was pleasure to me to receive such an order to start euthanasia? For fifteen years I had labored at the sick bed and every patient was to me like a brother, every sick child I worried about as if it had been my own. And then the hard fate hit me — is that guilt? Was it not my first thought to limit euthanasia? Did I not, the moment I was included, try to find a limit as well as finding a cure for the incurable? Were not the professors of Universities there? Who could there be who was more qualified? With the deepest devotion I have tortured myself again and again, but no philosophy and no other wisdom helped here. There was the decree and there on it there was my name. I do not say that I could have feigned sickness. I do not live this life of mine in order to avoid fate if I meet it. And thus I affirmed Euthanasia. I realize that the problem is as old as man, but it is not a crime against man or against humanity. Here I cannot believe like a clergyman or think as a Jurist. I am a doctor and I see the law of nature as being the law of reason. From that grew in my heart the love of man and it stands before my conscience. I am deeply conscious that when I said 'YES' to euthanasia I did so with the deepest conviction, just as it is my conviction today, that it is right. Death can mean relief. Death is life — just as much as birth. It was never meant to be murder. I bear this burden, but not the burden of crime. I bear this burden of mine, though, with a heavy heart as my responsibility. Before it, I survive and prevail, and before my consciences, as a man and a doctor.¹⁸

Other witnesses at his trial did attest to the humanity and medical skill Dr. Brandt showed to German patients. Father Sebastian Weih, a priest and corporal in the first medical company of the 296th Infantry Division testified:

At the bridgehead of the river Dnjepr opposite Bobruisk the division came under heavy attack on the 23rd and 24th of December, 1943. Suddenly Dr. Karl Brandt appeared and without demanding any military honors or inspecting our station he immediately substituted for our surgeons who were very overtired and [Brandt] attended the wounded throughout the whole Christmas Eve and carried out difficult operations under constant threat of enemy fire. I do not know Dr. Brandt apart from this; it was my only meeting with him. But I am sure that Brandt revealed his innermost human feelings and his character by his noble approach to us, his compassion for the wounded, his readiness to help.¹⁹

Dr. I. Ervien, age 65, testified on Feb 11, 1947 that as a political prisoner at the Ravensbruck concentration camp she was scheduled to be transferred to a killing center but was spared because of Dr. Karl Brandt's intervention.²⁰ The court rejected Brandt's argument and rejected, as well, the support given to him by others. It sentenced him and six of his co-defendants to

be hanged. Brandt demonstrates the difficulty humans “created in the image of God” have in acknowledging or changing their own evil actions as well as demonstrating the power of Jung’s concept of *The Shadow*. Jung states, “Unfortunately there can be no doubt that man is, on the whole, less good than he imagines himself or wants to be. Everyone carries a shadow and the less it is embedded in the individual’s consciousness the blacker and denser it is.”⁴ Therefore, it should come as no shock that Brandt’s final words were:

It is, of course, not surprising that the nation [USA] which in the face of the history of humanity will have to bear the guilt for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that this nation tries to hide itself behind moral superlatives. She does not bend the law. Justice has never been here! Neither in the whole nor in the particular. What dictates is power. And this power wants victims. We are such victims. I am such a victim.¹⁸

B. Countess Alice von Platen: Born into the aristocratic von Platen family on April 28, 1910, she was raised by a landowning father with socialist sympathies and an Anglophile mother. English was her first language and the English traditions of fairness and democracy were part of her heritage. During her medical school days in Munich she witnessed the violence and intimidation of others by Nazi students first hand. After qualifying as a doctor in 1935 she worked as an assistant physician in Potsdam and there she saw first hand the cruel treatment that the psychiatrist Hans Heinze inflicted on his patients. Not surprisingly, Dr. Heinze later took part in the euthanasia of children. Von Platen left Germany and completed her medical training in Florence, but when the war broke out she returned to Germany to practice medicine.¹⁶ During the war she worked as a country doctor first in Bavaria and later in Austria. She had patients who would come to her saying that they had family members who were in institutions for the mentally ill and asked what they should do. She could only answer by saying:

I don’t know anything precise, but I’ve heard of cases of death, take your relatives away from there as soon as possible, and sometimes I was also able to write a letter: “For such and such a patient there would be room with his family.” Most of the time such a letter was in vain, it was either too late or the patient had already been hauled away or, as they said, this patient can not be dismissed because the number of cases of death in the institutions, the percentage that were required to be killed, had to be fulfilled.¹⁰

After the war Dr. von Platen worked with Professor Viktor von Weizsacker in his psychosomatic clinic at the University of Heidelberg. He recommended her to a post on the Nuremberg delegation headed by Alexander Mitscherlich. She became exposed to the horrors euthanasia inflicted on the mentally ill and went through what she would later describe as her “dark time.”¹⁰ Dr. Mitscherlich went on to publish his book *Medicine without Humanity* which focused on human experimentation and the legal and political questions associated with the process. The depths of the depravity that she witnessed gave Dr. von Platen an urgent reason to inform the public that the killing of mentally ill patients in Germany represented a systematic crime, deeply involving psychiatry and the deliberate ignorance of the German medical profession. Her book, published in the Catholic oriented journal *Frankfurter Hefte*, was edited by Eugen Kogon, a former Buchenwald prisoner and a witness of human experiments.¹⁶ The

book, considered scandalous by the German medical establishment, was quickly confiscated²¹ and promptly disappeared from view. Of the three thousand copies published in the first edition only twenty survived.¹⁰

Later, others would gain academic honors and great renown for their work in exploring the horrors of this time. But in 1948, Dr. Alice von Platen received nothing for her work but threats. Revealing the magnitude of the German medical establishment's betrayal of trust was thought to be more than the German people could take in 1948. Yet the courage and strength of Alice von Platen has allowed others to see the importance of the integrity of the individual when confronted with the force and power of any institution. After the publication of her book in 1948, Countess von Platen could not work in Germany and eventually moved to England. In 1956, she married Baron Augusto Ricciardi who worked for the Italian Tourist Bureau. The couple moved to Brussels, and then to Tripoli and then, finally, to Rome. When, in the 1990s, the German Government asked her to return to Germany to receive a gold medal she thanked them for the honor but asked that it be given to her in Rome. She was a pioneer in the development of group psychotherapy; she worked at summer conferences in Altausee, Austria; and she introduced group psychotherapy clinics in the Ukraine and other Eastern European countries.

During the sixties some students became aware of Dr. von Platen's book, and in the eighties the interest in her work heightened.^{10, 21} When the book was finally re-published in 1993 Dr. von Platen became widely appreciated for all that her book meant to the German medical profession. She was appointed by the German section of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and she was chosen to be President of their Congress of Medicine and Conscience²² which was convened to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Nuremberg Trials. In 2006 she attended the sixtieth anniversary of the Nuremberg Trials where she, at the age of 96, gave a powerful and well received address to a packed audience in the Nuremberg Town Hall. She spoke of the threat of the ideas of Nazi Germany that still existed in twenty-first century Germany. Noting that the dangers of rejecting or expelling people simply because they are different or strange, since life would be colorless and we poor in our knowledge about people and their 'beingness' if we allowed all with abnormalities to be summarily removed, Dr. von Platen concluded forcibly: "As long as people are alive only a part of them will correspond to what is known as an average person. ... Help us to provide a new home for those who are excluded."^{17, 23}

The 2001 French translation of Dr. von Platen's book, *The Killing of the Mentally Ill in Nazi Germany*, contains a preface to the French edition by Jean Ayme, a preface to the second edition by Klaus Dorner, an introduction to the second edition by Dr. von Platen and the introduction to the 1948 edition by Dr. von Platen. Described as "terrible necessary"²⁴ the book portrays the roots of killing the mentally ill in Germany and in so doing raises ethical questions that all societies deal with today. Professor Ayme points out that "euphemism and secrecy"²⁵ hold the key to understanding how the Nazis promoted and supported the "compassionate

and economic" double face of euthanasia²⁶ which allowed Nazi physicians to describe themselves as "biological soldiers of the nation." As Dr. von Platen noted "the national socialist ideology only has place for force, [for] the normal and [for] perfection."²⁷ Professor Ayme wonders "what does the future hold for us in a society where the dominant values are profit, success, perfection and elimination."²⁸ Klaus Doner describes how "the psychiatrists most engaged in new treatments such as Drs. Carl Schneider, Heyde and Nitsche found themselves the principle actors in the extermination of their own patients."²⁹ In the introduction to the second edition of her book, Dr. von Platen notes that "Germany, destroyed and starving, was unwilling to take into account the published accounts of the Doctor's Trial"³⁰ and concludes this introduction by saying, "Let us hope that doctors will know how to approach with infinite precautions these new horizons [of genetic disease and engineering]."³¹

In her 1948 edition Dr. von Platen stated that "We propose to determine the theoretical motivations that lead to the extermination of the mentally ill in Nazi Germany and how the ideological principles of the Third Reich were imposed on the specialty of psychotherapy."³² Dr. von Platen classified those in promoting and practicing euthanasia into three groups: 1) Idealists: these killed out of compassion for their patients; 2) Fanatics: these supported killing in order to defend the 'Purity of the Race;' 3) The Authorities of the Party: these had the power and the willingness to carry out the extermination.³³ These three groups created a world where insightful people like Dr. von Platen can say, "When the path is taken to destroy 'unworthy lives' there is no longer any limits. When ideological considerations and arguments allow the destruction of 'abnormal life' then life itself is also destroyed."³¹ Dr. von Platen not only understood that "When the collective interests of the state takes precedence, the right of the individual is no longer evident" but also that "the mentally ill, their image of the world and interior images, take us to the heart of the question of human life and we should give the mentally ill our profound respect and love."³⁴ In Nazi Germany, "euthanasia has never been a medical question but exclusively a political question."³⁵ All these prefaces and introductions lead to the book itself.

The Killing of the Mentally Ill in Germany. Dr. von Platen's book, recounts: (1) the origins of euthanasia in Germany, (2) the role of Hitler and euthanasia, (3) the preparatory phase of the movement, (4) the appointment of the Reich Commission in charge of genetic and heredity illness, (5) the initial phase in the euthanasia of adults, (6) the extermination of concentration camp prisoners — Aktion 14f13, (7) the responsibility of medical doctors with regard to euthanasia, (8) the doctors of the euthanasia program, (9) the terror within the euthanasia program, and (10) the resistance to euthanasia. The following represents a brief summary of what Dr. von Platen wrote in these ten chapters as well as research that has occurred since 1948.

(1) The Origins of Euthanasia in Germany.^{11,12,13,14} In her first chapter Dr. von Platen refers to the work of Binding and Hoche.³⁶ In 1920 they published a small book entitled *Allowing the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life*.³⁷ In it Judge Binding interpreted existing German law to mean that suicide or attempted suicide was not illegal in Germany. Therefore, helping some-

one with a terminal and/or painful illness die was not murder but a lawful act in the interest of the patient. Hoche argued that the killing of patients who had neither value to society nor themselves should be legal. This medical murder would “relieve the patients suffering, purify the race and save the state money. “ Hitler read the book while writing his *MEIN KAMPF* in prison. He embraced the concept, “*lebensunwerten leben*” (“life not worth life”) with great enthusiasm as did many German physicians. Published before *MEIN KAMPF*, Hitler not only read the book, he lent his name to advertisements for the book. Hoche, who married a Jew, left his post at Freiberg after the National Socialists came to power. He subsequently privately criticized the Nazi euthanasia program after it claimed one of his relatives as its victim even though he had written in 1920: “Their (the disabled) life is absolutely pointless, but they do not regard it as being unbearable. They are a terrible burden upon their relatives and society as a whole. Their death would not create even the smallest gap — except perhaps in the feelings of their mothers or loyal nurses.”³⁷

Dr. H.W. Kranz, director of the Political Racial Bureau of the Nazi Party for Hesse-Nassau and the Institute of Eugenics at the University of Giessen in a 1940 article entitled “The Problem of the Socially Maladjusted in the Process of the Biological Perfection of Our Nation” wrote that “We should evaluate the individual in regard to the place he occupies in society, the manner in which he is integrated, and the contribution he is capable of bringing.”

(2) The Role of Hitler in Euthanasia. Platen quotes Adolf Hitler as saying,

All great cultures of the past perished only because the original creative race died out from contamination of their blood. The ultimate cause of such a decline was their forgetting that all cultures depend on men and not conversely; hence that to preserve a certain culture the man who creates it must be preserved. This preservation is bound up with the rigid law of necessity and the right to victory of the best and stronger in this world. Those who want to live, let them fight, and those who do not wish to fight in this world of eternal struggle do not deserve to live.³⁹

To Dr. von Platen the above quote demonstrates Hitler's faith in his understanding of biological forces. “Only the particular connotation of the quasi-religious concept of biology seen in the thought of Hitler and the National Socialist can allow us to understand the events (caused by Euthanasia).” As Hitler noted “Whomever considers National Socialism uniquely as a political movement is not capable of understanding it. It is even more than a religion, it is the will to create a new man. Politics is completely blind if it does not rest on biological foundations and finalities.”⁴⁰

Dr. von Platen views the effect of “the ‘pseudo-religious’ concept of life and race on morality, politics and science as the origin of social and cultural degeneration.”⁴⁰ As such it helps to understand the order written by the Fuhrer on his own personal stationery after the invasion and back-dated⁴¹ to coincide with the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. Reich Leader Bouhler and Dr. Brandt are charged with the responsibility for expanding the authority of physicians, to be designated by name, to the end that patients considered incurable according to the best human judgment of their state of health, can be granted a mercy death.”⁴² This per-

sonal order from the Fuhrer was to remain secret throughout the war. It had the force of law but it did not go through the usual proceedings to make it a law. The reasons for this were twofold. First, making it a law meant that public discussions would take place with possible unpleasant consequences and, second, making it public meant that Germany's enemies could use it against the Nazis.⁴³ Brandt justified the back dating of the September 1 memo. In 1933 Hitler had spoken to Brandt about how the public would not support elimination of the mentally ill in times of peace. In 1935 he told Dr. Wagner, Chief of Doctors in the Nazi Party, that euthanasia would be more acceptable to the public in time of war.⁴⁴ Hitler's program, started on September 1, 1939, had the code name Action T4, an abbreviation for the address Tiergartenstrasse #4, the headquarters for "Gemeinnutzige Stiftung für Heil-und Anstaltspflege" (Charitable Foundation for Cure and Institutional Care).⁴⁵ It carried out an extensive documentation of mentally ill and deformed infants, children and, later, adults. Originally described as a humane way to put the hopelessly ill out of their misery, the T4 program quickly became a murderous machine that killed indiscriminately all who entered into it. By so doing it fulfilled Hitler's concept; "He who is bodily and mentally not sound and deserving may not perpetuate this misfortune in the bodies of his children. The *volkische* (peoples') state has to perform the most gigantic rearing-task here. One day, however, it will appear as a deed greater than the most victorious wars of our present bourgeois era."⁴⁶ As the brutal program expanded, it became noticeable and opposition to it grew. Catholics protested the transfer of patients to killing centers, but initially the Nazi Party ignored the protests. The Secretary of the Party, Martin Bormann said: "It was natural for Christians to protest but just as important that the Party support the commission (T4)."⁴⁷

[Although not part of Dr. von Platen's book, in July, 1941 a pastoral letter from the Bishops was read out in all Catholic Churches; it declared that it was wrong to kill except in self-defense or morally justified wars.⁴⁸ On August 3, 1941, Bishop Clemens von Galen of Munster, in a sermon widely circulated throughout Germany and in a telegraph sent to Hitler himself, asked the Fuhrer "to defend the people against the Gestapo." In his sermon he said; "It is terrible, unjust and catastrophic when man opposes his will to the will of God."⁴⁹ Widespread protests unfolded throughout Germany forcing Hitler to officially stop the T4 program by the end of August 1941.]

Dr. von Platen made the observation that "The moral structure of the leaders of the Party, regarding their position on euthanasia, reflected a faithful mirror of the Fuhrer's personality."⁵⁰ [Though not part of her book, Joseph Goebbels, while speaking to an important 1938 Nazi Party Conference, summed up the German vision of the new Nazi world when he told the audience "Our starting point is not the individual and we do not subscribe to the view that one 'should feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, or clothe the naked.' Our objectives are entirely different. We must have healthy people in order to prevail in the world."⁵¹ Goebbels thus rejects Matthew 25: 34-39 as well as Matthew 25: 40; ("as you have done unto these the least of my people you have done unto me"). In so doing, he brings down upon himself and all who

support him the judgment found in Matthew 25: 41; ("Then shall the King turn to those on his left and say 'get you from my presence you cursed into the everlasting fires reserved for the devil and his angels'"). For modern sophisticates who view threats of eternal damnation as so much ancient religious superstition, consider Gandhi's concept that "the future depends on what we do in the present"⁵² and then look at what happened to Nazi Germany after 1938.]

(3) The German Government Prepared the People to accept Euthanasia. Recall that Hitler told Dr. Wagner in 1935 that the public would accept euthanasia in time of war but not in time of peace.⁴⁴ The Nuremberg Laws moved toward the idea of euthanasia by legalizing special courts to supervise the sterilization of those with genetic disorders such as feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, insanity, genetic epilepsy, Huntington's chorea, genetic deafness or blindness, or severe alcoholism.⁵³ In 1937 Hitler told the Party Congress that the grand revolution in Germany was the creation of a "new man."⁵⁴ While the Nazi party never spoke of exterminating the mentally ill their description of mental illness in biological terms gave the sterilization laws great appeal to the credulous who viewed such laws as an effective defense against the mentally ill.⁵⁵ Critics contended that "Sterilization represents a grave assault on the rights of the individual — the repercussions on the nation are not known."⁵⁶ Indeed, even the Eugenics Foundation noted that "It would be a fatal error to believe that the extensive use of Eugenics would be able to resolve the question of the mentally ill. It must be remembered that (in moving) to the next stage, that is Euthanasia, the passage is very narrow."⁵⁶ The arguments for and against eugenics support Dr. von Platen's insight that "The more fragile the ethical and scientific foundations of an ordinance, the more strongly it was confirmed by the Nazis."⁵⁷ E. Melzner, a supporter of the National-Socialists denounced Binding's and Hoche's book but thought that the ethical principles of the Party would prevent the party from carrying out the extermination of the mentally ill. He understood that such an act would quickly lead to the "the total destruction of confidence in doctors."^{58, 14}

To hasten the acceptance of euthanasia as a reasonable policy Hitler and the Nazis engaged in a multifaceted approach. The Nazi Party carried out an extensive propaganda campaign in favor of euthanasia by producing leaflets, posters, brochures and short films showing the cost of maintaining asylums for the incurably ill and insane.⁵⁹ These efforts marked the point where Social Darwinism turns into Fascist racial policy providing the reasoning for euthanasia. Eugenics became a major department in medical schools and passing an examination in eugenics becomes an important part of becoming a doctor. The acceptance of eugenics imbued physicians with a scientific rationale for euthanasia. Because of this indoctrination over several years, by 1939 a corps of state doctors and Party psychiatrists gave no resistance to the euthanasia program.⁵⁹ Dr. von Platen spoke against this propaganda by noting, "The best argument always remains the concrete example of assistance in the service of the ill ... [that is being] ... ready to accompany them in their suffering."⁶⁰

(4) The Reich Commission in Charge of Genetic and Hereditary Illnesses. In February of 1939 in Leipzig a child was born with severe deformities including missing one leg, part of

one arm, blind, suffering seizures and, according to some, was appropriately designated an 'idiot'. The father asked if this unfortunate infant could be euthanized. Hitler sent his personal physician, Karl Brandt, to examine the child and when Brandt confirmed the child's condition, euthanasia took place. From this case, Hitler created the "Reich Committee for the Scientific Registering of Serious Hereditary and Congenital Illnesses" headed by Dr. Karl Brandt and Reich Chancellor Phillip Bouhler and administered by Herbert Linden of the Interior Ministry and SS officer Viktor Brack.⁶¹ Starting in August of 1939 the Interior Ministry required midwives and doctors to report all newborns and children under three years of age with "suspected idiocy, Down Syndrome (especially those blind or deaf), microcephaly, hydrocephaly, malformations of all kinds, especially of limbs, head, and spinal column, and paralysis, including spastic conditions. The reports were evaluated by a panel of 'medical experts' of whom three approvals were necessary before recommending the child be put to death.⁶² The approval from parents was easily obtained by telling them that their child was being sent to a specialized center and would be given the latest in specialized care. (Even though no surgeons or neurosurgeons worked at the centers.)⁶³ According to Dr. Pfanmuller, the choice of 'compassionate death' was left up to the individual doctor. Hydrocephalic infants needed less luminal than those with better hearts. The child would be given progressively larger doses of drugs until falling asleep, eventually developing pneumonia and dying. Dr. Pfanmuller insisted that these children died of pneumonia and not poisoning.⁶⁴ Dr. Mennecke wrote his wife on January 14, 1942 describing to her how he killed "infantile psychiatric" patients.⁶⁵ Initially, the brains of those killed at the Center at Eichberg were dissected there. Eventually the patients would be clinically evaluated at the University of Heidelberg; sent to Eichberg to be killed; and then their brains returned to Heidelberg for dissection.⁶⁶ Originally, Dr. Mennecke took proud responsibility for his work, but at his trial he denied this.⁶⁷ Wilhelmine Stahl described how children became afraid to go to the hospitals because they knew that they would never come back.⁶⁸ Healthy Jewish children sent to the centers because they were Jewish were all killed. According to Dr. von Platen, "The doctors and nurses engaged in the activities of the Reich received an extraordinary bonus as recompense for their horrible work: the money was given in exchange for their silence and participation in this activity."⁶⁹

(5) The Expansion of Euthanasia Program to Include Adults. The second phase of Action T4 was set up under the direction of SS officer Viktor Brack. Phillip Bouhler and Brack were not doctors and Brandt was not a psychiatrist but all served the Fuhrer. The psychiatrists Professor Werner Heyde, from the University of Wurzburg, and Professor Paul Nitsche, director of the asylum at Sonnenstein, had important roles in the program.⁷⁰ The program itself was divided into three parts which operated independently of each other and thus were not fully aware of what each did. The parts were a:

(a) General Foundation for setting up and overseeing the personnel who ran the death centers;

(b) Reich Command that established therapy and hospitals which would develop ques-

tionnaires concerning who would be eligible for transfer to the death centers as well as having 'experts' evaluate these questionnaires;

(c) Society of Public Utilities that transported patients to the death centers.⁷¹

Adult patients eligible for transfer to such centers included adults in mental institutions, those who had been institutionalized for more than five years with mental or emotional problems, those who were criminally insane, and those who were "non-Aryan" or had schizophrenia, epilepsy, Huntington's chorea, advanced syphilis, senile dementia, paralysis, encephalitis, 'general terminal neurological conditions.' They and all Jews were to be removed from institutions and killed. Viktor Brack decided that Jews put into these categories should be denied the 'privilege' of being euthanized but rather should be sent to concentration camps.⁷² Many directors of the asylums who found the questionnaires absurd and frustrating had others fill them out. At Weilmünster, it is reported that a retired physician filled out 1,500 forms in two weeks. Dr. Mathilde Weber, director of the Institute at Kalmenhof, filled out 1,000 forms. At asylums, where for religious or other personal reasons, physicians did not fill out the forms, commissioners from Berlin would arrive and fill out the forms without seeing the patients or talking to the doctors.⁷³ The selection process was very imprecise and many were selected who could not be considered "psychically dead."⁷⁴

The Foundation for General Institutes set up six killing centers at Bernberg, Sonnenstein, Hartheim, Brandenburg, Grafeneck and Hadamar all of which had their own gas chambers that looked like showers and four crematoriums for incinerating the dead. The center at Grafeneck killed up to fifty people a day. The personnel at these centers, with the exception of the secretaries, were not very bright and did not have appropriate training but did show great Party loyalty. The secretaries, who sent out letters of condolences to the families of the dead, did have good training. Each center had a pleasant exterior and a well stocked mess hall where the staff could party and get drunk. Those employees who worked for Society of Public Utilities that transported patients to the centers developed a well deserved reputation for brutality.⁷⁴

In the beginning, each district had a triage center where, ostensibly, patients from asylums would be evaluated for their suitability for transfer to the killing centers. Separating patients from familiar surroundings had a naturally catastrophic effect on them. The patients became even more disoriented and disturbed. Eventually the name 'triage centers' was changed to observation centers. The patients at the observation centers had forms filled out by three experts. Some experts could file 200 reports in three days and one center submitted 5,475 reports in a six month period. The reports were then sent to a supervisor at another institution who would decide whether or not to proceed with transfer to the killing centers.⁷⁵

Following the death of a patient, the family would receive a letter notifying them of the patient's death that occurred in spite of all the efforts of the doctors and the institution. The family would be given sincere condolences and told that their loved one was now free of suffering and pain. The family also was informed that in order to prevent the spread of disease

the patient's belongings and body had been cremated. Tragic errors sometimes occurred with these letters. One family was told the cause of death was appendicitis, even though the man had had his appendix removed ten years earlier.⁷⁶

Once the process to send a patient to the killing center started, it was almost impossible to stop. At Eichberg, Nurse Elisabeth Muller and Dr. Conrad did reverse a transfer order.⁷⁷ [The case of Dr. Eirwen²⁰ offers another example of how powerful people could change the system.] Otto Mahrwalder, a schizophrenic veteran of WWI, received such a reprieve.⁷⁸ Political prisoners were labeled criminal psychopaths and sent to the centers. On September 29, 1940, Dr. Pfannmuller bragged that Egging had no more Jews.⁷⁹ No one at the centers had any scruples about killing patients even if they had been productive workers. In order to control cost some asylums resorted to starvation as a way to hasten death. Patients would arrive at the killing centers crying out "*Ich bin hungrig; Ich bin hungrig.*" Those who understood what was happening were very fearful. Those who offered food to others had their rations reduced.⁸⁰

Protests from the public forced the closure of Gravenneck in January of 1941 while protests started by the Catholic Church in August of 1941 led Hitler to officially stop the T4 program. This led to what Viktor Brack described as the 'unofficial' euthanasia program. And the public opinion that stopped the use of gas chambers to kill the mentally ill was no longer effective in stopping the 'unofficial' euthanasia program. Dr. von Platen recorded all this and wrote:

It is certain that a single murder will provoke hundreds more if one does not renounce to its very roots the ideology that produced the killing. It is undeniable that the practice of euthanasia, that is the consequence of a deviant human nature and conception of human life, contributed to this destruction of values which still affects us today.⁸²

(6) The Extermination of Concentration Camp Prisoners in the Euthanasia Centers. With the official end of the T4 euthanasia program in August, 1941, Viktor Brack set up the 14f13 program under a direct order from Chancellor Buehler.⁸³ In carrying out this order Dr. Mennecke wrote from Buchenwald to his wife that on November 25, 1941 he and Muller examined 183 patients whom they deemed suitable to send to the "premier terminal group", i.e. to the killing centers. He also saw 200 Jews who did not need to be examined before sending them to the centers.⁸⁴ Using a questionnaire with over 40 items, including the race of the patient and the diagnosis, patients were chosen for extermination on the flimsiest of grounds.⁸⁵ There are many examples of this practice. Wolf Israel Nowak was sent because of the diagnosis of "aversion to Germany, member of the German communist party, and agitator,"⁸⁶ Oppenheim Alfred Israel received the same fate because he had the diagnosis of "Anti-German fanatic and asocial psychopath, Communist, and opposed to military service."⁸⁶ Dr. Hoven, in 1941, learned that at Buchenwald, under a secret order, 300-400 Jews were to be sent to Bernberg for execution. He was told to write false death certificates under the cover of order 14f13.⁸⁶ Dr. Muthig declared in November, 1941 that he was told by Dr. Lolling that four psychiatrists came to Dachau and examined four hundred inmates who were either unable to work or who had bad political records. All were then transferred to the gas chambers at the Mauthausen killing cen-

ter. Dr. Muthig reported that all this took place as part of 14f13, a secret affair of the Reich.⁸⁷ Dr. von Platen concludes this chapter by stating, "One finds it difficult to comprehend how a number of medical specialists could accept, without protest, such banal work as the compilation of false data."⁸⁸

7) The Responsibility of Medical Doctors with regards to Euthanasia. To the Nazis being responsible meant that the individual would adhere exclusively to the logic of the State. This meant dealing with problems like euthanasia according to the authorities even if this resolution ran counter to one's professional competency. After 1933 the Nazis taught that all individuals, including doctors, had to find in the Fuhrer the highest personification of human and political thought.⁸⁹ Doctors were not just to heal but also to kill when necessary. Removing part of the population in order to heal the state was analogous to removing part of the body to heal the patient.⁹⁰

The Nazi idea of sacrifice had major importance because of the power it exerted on young minds. In his deposition in Nuremberg, Karl Brandt stated that:

Each doctor was responsible for his acts that foresaw at the end euthanasia. One must absolutely not believe that these doctors were obliged to carry out euthanasia if they were not personally convinced of it. On the contrary, one imposed on the doctors to not carry out euthanasia if they were opposed to it.⁹¹

Brandt later testified "I did not have the duty to shorten the life of the mentally ill but rather intervened in the role of a medical expert." Dr. Mennecke, on the other hand, testified about efforts made to influence him. "Brack has told me that I was too often negative and too often positive (about euthanasia)."⁹² Dr. von Platen described Viktor Brack's thought processes as being prisoners of a "tortured formalism." To support this concept Dr. von Platen recorded a lengthy exchange between Judge Beal and Brack over who signed the order to kill a hypothetical patient Johann Schmidt. The exchange ended with Brack claiming that because the doctor was a functionary of the state he was disengaged from responsibility. Brack went on to state that since Bouhler was not a physician and Brandt not a psychiatrist the responsibility given to them was an expression of the confidence the Fuhrer had in them.⁹³ Brack did have administrative authority over the running of Action T4. When the psychiatrist Heyde recommended someone Brack often would refuse to accept the recommendation on political grounds. The results of these disagreements lead to selecting doctors with "modest competency." This lead to phenomenon of "non-culpability" in science and caused the Nazis to view pure science as "utopian folly."⁹⁴ The pseudo-scientific dimensions of modest competency of many professors allowed them to support euthanasia. But as Dr. von Platen notes: "The order of human values is endangered each time the rights of the sick are not protected."⁹⁵ "The continual terror that the common man has always felt regarding medical science finds itself justified. There exists no guarantee that medical science will know how to oppose itself and protest if one found oneself facing unacceptable human pretensions."⁹⁶

8) The Doctors of the Euthanasia Program. The doctors of the Euthanasia Program represent, in a concrete fashion, the reality of euthanasia and the confusion in which each doctor

found himself. Most of them sooner or later became gravely ill or had neurotic problems linked to their internal problems. The more accomplished they became the more constraints they encountered. Dr. von Platen offered the following reflection:

We cannot avoid asking ourselves how we would have behaved in their place. Their lack of autonomy in the place of decisions was to a great extent the expression of a more general absence of auto-determination and incapacity to oppose measures that were taken that they did not share.⁹⁷

Dr. Fredrich Mennecke was neither a gifted nor a skilled clinician. He would not have had an important leadership position outside of Germany. He joined the Party in 1932; became an honorary functionary of the SS in 1932; graduated from medical school in 1936 and assumed the easy position at the asylum at Eichberg. Landesrat of Wiesbaden, Wulf Bernot, saw Dr. Mennecke as someone in whom you could have confidence. Mennecke insinuated himself into an irreproachable position in the SS. Dr. Hison, Director of the Sanatorium at Eichberg, described Mennecke as an intriguer with no capacity to understand his patients. Through intrigues Dr. Mennecke replaced Dr. Hinson as Director of Eichberg. Mennecke declared that "[He] was a Nazi in his heart before he became a doctor."⁹⁸

Professor Kranz, Mennecke's immediate supervisor, adopted Hitler's racial policies but later claimed that he had never thought of euthanasia before September 1, 1939. After September 1 he became part of the program and on January 31, 1940, for 'superior reasons' was assigned exclusively to the euthanasia program. In 1942 he was given the title of Neurologist. Later at the Doctors' Trial he claimed that the nomination had nothing to do with his support of euthanasia.⁹⁸ In 1940 Mennecke went to a conference in Berlin with Dr. Nitsche who asked Mennecke to collaborate as an expert in the euthanasia program. He was told that the final decision would be in the hands of the doctors in the euthanasia centers and not in the hands of the experts. Mennecke noted that he "did not have the impression that doctors could not fulfill this task." He toured throughout Germany, filling out questionnaires at asylums and writing thank you notes to his hosts. His goal was to decrease the number of patients in asylums. Later in 1940 his duties were expanded to the concentration camps. He cultivated good relations with directors of the euthanasia program sending them fine wine and other food.⁹⁹ He was on a path to success when he made a misstep which angered Bernotat, who turned against him. Mennecke was removed from his position, put into the army and sent to the front where he contracted tuberculosis and retired. Imprisoned as part of the Doctors' Trial, Mennecke died in 1947 during the trial.¹⁰⁰

Dr. Walter Schmidt was Director-in-Chief of Eichberg since 1941. Dr. Schmidt had a more complex personality than Dr. Mennecke. Born in 1911, he obtained his baccalaureate in 1932 and his medical degree in 1939. He was a member of the Hitler Youth in 1927, the Nazi party in 1930, and the SS in 1932. He returned from the front in 1941 and for 'reasons superior' was made Commissioner of the Reich at Eichberg when Mennecke was sent to the front. He was then brought to Berlin with 40 – 50 other persons and was told what was expected of him at Eichberg concerning the euthanasia program. Brack told him that failure to carry out orders

would be considered sabotage. Schmidt understood this to mean that if he did not follow orders he would be shot. Schmidt did not have the courage to rise up and protest even if he disapproved of the program.¹⁰¹ Schmidt tried to concentrate on finding therapeutic ways to treat the mentally ill since he understood that killing patients would be the end of psychiatry. At Eichberg he introduced insulin shock therapy, electroshock therapy, Cardizol, marconitherapy, and fresh glandular extracts. He enlisted the help of Bernotat in developing a therapeutic program and tried to find better ways to diagnose his patients including doing EEGs on infants. He went to seminars at the University of Heidelberg and was able to observe patients up to two months in a year. He stopped autopsies and witnessed the last transfer of a patient from Eichberg to the killing center at Hadamar.¹⁰² When he first came to Eichberg Schmidt saw a patient with a meningocele who died of an infection following surgery. He viewed what happened to this child as different from what happened at Hadamar and worked to transform Eichberg into a model center for the mentally ill. He approved of euthanasia for the most ill and did kill adult patients with massive doses of phenobarbital and morphine. To Schmidt it was a case of being in agony or being treated by a commissioner of the Reich. It was impossible to distinguish between therapeutic and lethal injections. He would stand by a bed and say, "this does not please me" which was taken as an order for a lethal injection. His relationship with Bernotat allowed the asylum at Eichberg to obtain important equipment. But Schmidt did nothing for the quality of life of the patients or to improve their nutrition. He believed in the objective value of therapy. In his opinion, the personhood of the doctor, the general atmosphere, and the soul of the patient had no importance whatsoever. For his private patients outside the asylum he had excellent renown and was greatly loved. Within the asylum he was viewed as a sadistic assassin. One could question whether or not his work in the asylum discredited his therapeutic achievements. He claimed that "the only remedy for heart of the elderly ill is morphine."¹⁰³

Dr. Gorgass was born in 1909. Both his parents had psychological problems. He specialized in psychiatry and went to Eichberg in 1936. He became director of the Sanatorium at Kalmenhof in 1938 and sent to the front in 1939. He had enrolled in the Party in 1932 and following a motor accident at the front was sent by Bernotat for 'reasons superior' to Berlin. Brach told him that the Fuhrer had authorized center doctors to administer "compassionate death" to the mentally ill. Gorgass believed that he could not remove himself from collaborating. He was, however, in conflict with himself. He approved of euthanasia, but when he realized his activity was to kill he became overwhelmed. It was impossible to refuse the task. The ill were in a terminal condition without help. The participation of Schneider, Heyde, Nitsche, and others comforted him a little. He was asked to photograph patients for eventual scientific papers. The ill would then be taken into chambers and asphyxiated with carbon monoxide. Gorgass became increasingly discouraged and nervous and even considered suicide. Dr. Berner, the director at Hadamar, told Gorgass that his frustration was similar to the battalion commander who must lead his men to their death. This reflected Brach's military spirit.¹⁰⁴

Dr. Wahlmann, born in 1876, was a psychiatrist at the asylum at Hesse. A musician and devoted Christian he led his church choir. He joined the Party in 1932 because 'everyone did' and in order to lead the choir. However, he did not participate in Party functions. He suffered with pulmonary angina and retired in 1936. After the war began he returned to service and became director of Hadamar in 1942. He approved of euthanasia as a way to save resources. If two electroshock treatments did not help then euthanasia might be considered. The possibility of eliminating by way of a simple injection a person who was neither physically ill nor suffering terrified him. He told the doctors at the Psychiatric asylum that "I am always of the opinion that the mentally ill should be treated with love and I have always recommended this love."¹⁰⁵ When Bernotat transferred Dr. Wahlmann to Hadamar he said that Hadamar would again become a good center. The leaders in Berlin did not want that to happen. Execution was the only option for those opposed to euthanasia. Bernotat warned Wahlmann that Klein, the administrative of Hadamar, would make all important decisions and that initiatives against Klein's orders would be useless. The cynicism with which Klein and Bernotat abused Wahlmann — manipulating him like a useful puppet in their hands — would be incredible, if it had not been described by eye witnesses. All the mail that Wahlmann received or sent went through Klein who altered them as Klein wished. Klein annulled Wahlmann's orders to stop executions and, with Bernotat, threatened to send Wahlmann to a concentration camp if he did not accommodate them and sign false death certificates. In the spirit of Klein, no patient was to leave the asylum alive. In spite of this Wahlmann was able to send back to their original institutions a large portion of patients hospitalized for the first time, whereas patients from other asylums were rapidly poisoned by the head nurse or her assistants. Wahlmann had nothing to do with the exterminations and did not want to know anything about them. According to his deposition and that of his head nurse it is not clear which of the two chose patients to be killed.¹⁰⁶ By the end, fear took over and Wahlmann did whatever he was told. He would not see patients and just signed the death certificates. When asked at his interrogation about the legality of euthanasia Wahlmann stated that he believed that a law existed. Klein and Bernotat both gave bad reports about him, but because he could not be replaced he was kept on.¹⁰⁷

At Kalmenhof the careers of Dr. Mathilde Weber, director from 1933 to 1944, and Dr. Herman Wesse differed markedly. Dr. Weber was greatly beloved by the staff and the patients. She did prevent the transfer of some patients to Hadamar the first time an order came but not the second. When she learned of the gas chambers at Hadamar she did her best to prevent transferring patients there. Bernotat told her that she should not know more. "The best thing is that the patients disappear quickly." The inner tensions broke Dr. Weber who became more fatigued, depressed and finally, in 1943, she developed tuberculosis and was freed from service.¹⁰⁸ Berlin's directives to Dr. Wesse were more explicit when he became director in 1944. He was told that execution was the law. To refuse meant being sent to a concentration camp. He was told that "it was not his place to judge." He kept secrets by a handshake and actively collaborated with the extermination of students from detention centers. Ruth Pappenheimer, a teenager

who had been diagnosed as asocial, was condemned to death for trying to commit suicide. Wesse himself carried out her sentence rather than go to the concentration camp.¹⁰⁹

Of the doctors and personnel described in this chapter, Brack and Dr. Brandt were condemned to death by the Nuremberg tribunal and were hanged on June 2, 1948. Dr. Nitsche was condemned to death by the Dresden tribunal but his sentence was commuted to life in prison. Dr. Mennecke was condemned to death by the tribunal at Frankfort on Main but died in prison. Dr. Pfanmuller was also condemned to death by the Frankfort tribunal but his sentence was commuted to six years in prison by the Munich tribunal. Dr. Heyde changed his name and escaped only to be recaptured in 1964. He committed suicide before his trial could begin. Dr. Weber and Dr. Wesse were condemned to death but their sentences were commuted to confinement. Others such as Carl Schneider, Muller, Steinmeyer, Bouhler and Conti all committed suicide.¹¹⁰

9) The Terror within the Euthanasia Program. "Doctors and nurses were constrained to silence and secrecy under the threat of death." Victor Brack, the ultimate authority in the running of the T4 Program, required that those who worked in the T4 program have "the courage to implement and the nerves to endure." Those who did participate in the program were sworn to absolute secrecy. Breaking this oath had dire consequences. Those who dared to oppose him were threatened with severe punishment against those who "sabotaged" him.¹¹¹ A secretary who was overheard talking in the lunch room at Grafeneck about the activities at that 'killing center' was confronted with her action and sent to a concentration camp. Professor Heyde was able to rescue her. Victor Brack firmly believed that such actions were more effective in maintaining silence than threats. Brack acted with irreproachable conduct when dealing with superiors but when dealing with those he considered his inferiors he reacted with arrogance. He reminded people that only one who had the absolute confidence of the Fuhrer could have a position such as his. His aura of power allowed others working in his bureau to use the same tone. Doctors who wanted to avoid the euthanasia program could do so without danger to themselves but the hand picked physicians and all of the nurses and auxiliaries chosen for the program could not.¹¹²

Dr. Mauthe, physician in chief at the government hospital at Wurttemberg, was threatened with death if he opposed an order given by Ministerial Councilor Stahle from Brack's office. Dr. Mauthe considered his options and gave into the order "all the while knowing that it had no legal foundation."¹¹³ At the asylum at Eglfing-Haar three nurses treating children with grave genetic illnesses of a hereditary nature were "constrained" to strict secrecy by Dr. Pfanmuller who invoked the power of the Reich. They were told that, "infractions of this secrecy would be punished by death."¹¹³ Pastor Braun, Vice President of the Evangelical Churches in Germany, reported on the mission of the asylums in Germany. He realized the consequences of such a report but "conscience and vocation" pushed him to release his article. He quickly experienced the consequences when he was arrested. The Gestapo denied any connection between his arrest and his report. He later learned that the true reason for his

arrest was his opposition to “death measures.”¹¹⁴ In Hesse the threat of concentration camps was applied by Landesrat Bernotat, a defender of the Reich without scruples. He exerted powerful pressure on all to carry out the euthanasia program in a “radical fashion.” He ran his bureau like a brutal despot. His secretary noted that he gradually was transformed from an admirable man in 1930 into a tyrant by 1938. He hid his weaknesses behind an exaggerated pompousness. He would never look at people in the face and he would give his orders while staring at the ground. He eventually became the most despised man in the bureau.¹¹⁵

Bernotat received his orders from his superiors in Berlin. The SS stood behind the unofficial euthanasia program that continued after 1941. He played a central and important role in mutating the asylum at Hesse into a killing asylum. He complained that the asylums did not kill enough and that Berlin acted too slowly. Weber, director at Kalmenhof from 1939 until 1944, was fundamentally opposed to euthanasia. Bernotat terrorized Dr. Weber into giving him the names of nurses who also opposed euthanasia.¹¹⁶ Nurse Paula Gerach, a Catholic, was told by Bernotat from Brack’s office that if he had the authority, she and all Catholic nurses would be sent to concentration camps. Fortunately Hitler’s ruling in August, 1941 meant that Catholics could not be treated in this manner.¹¹⁷

Bernotat and Klein ran the institution at Hadamar like a fortress. The canteen was well stocked so that the personnel did not have to go into town. The director, Dr. Berner, wore military uniforms in public and insisted the workers have a military spirit and no personal life. After 1936 all the nurses were employed by the Party. New nurses coming to work there quickly found that they would rather go to the front than stay at the killing center. To celebrate the 10,000th killing, Klein gathered all the staff to the basement where a naked cadaver decorated with flowers lay on a gurney in front of the crematory ovens. As Klein gave a sermon on the importance of their work, a member of the Gestapo, wearing his long black coat inside out to look like a priest, sang a funeral homily. Those present found all of this a cynical mockery of the church, but no one dared to speak out against it.¹¹⁸

At the end of communal meals all sang Nazi hymns. When nurse Haertle did not sing a Gestapo agent called her a “toad and a traitor” and threatened to send her to the concentration camps. A rumor spread among the secretaries who sent out letters to family members of those killed at Hadamar that after the euthanasia stopped they would be taken out on a party boat to celebrate. The boat would sink killing them all.¹¹⁹

In Hartheim Dr. von Platen describes how “Male nurse Kuehle was overheard talking about the gas chambers at that institution. He was arrested, falsely accused of theft, and sent to a concentration camp where a few weeks later he died of (what officially was described as) a “heart attack.”¹¹⁹ At Grafenneck the terror became so extreme that Himmler himself had it closed. The personnel treated patients so brutally and the indignation of the local inhabitants was so forceful that the killing center closed and the personnel admonished to be more discrete. The center showed films about mental illness and hereditary diseases. Unfortunately the local inhabitants did not recognize the importance of their opinion. The subsequent offi-

cial ending of the euthanasia program demonstrated the force of public opinion.¹²⁰ Bunkers were located in the basement of Eichberg. Patients and sometimes personnel were placed into them as punishment. Patients who arrived at the center disoriented and panicked would be restrained, given shots, and placed into the bunkers. Families who asked about how a given patient was being treated were told that they should not take seriously the accusations of delirious patients.¹²¹

A long series of letters between Dr. Schmidt and the father of a schizophrenic patient who died there illustrates the culture of killing centers throughout Germany. As the father, a retired professor of 'philologie,' asked more probing questions Dr. Schmidt became more defensive and hostile, emphasizing the hereditary nature of the patient's disease. And finally Dr. Schmidt threatened to personally perform a psychiatric exam on the father.¹²²

An exception to the terror and evil that characterized daily life at Eichberg was Nurse Rita Fischer who bathed her patients with love and cared for them. In describing the way this nurse functioned in an institution like Eichberg, Dr. von Platen concludes "As the picture of euthanasia emerges we must be thankful to any person like this nurse who opposed the terror and defended human values silently but efficaciously against the brutality of a man like Bernotat."¹²³

10) The Resistance against Euthanasia. Dr. von Platen felt that the picture of the killing of the mentally ill would be incomplete without describing some of the ways doctors and nurses resisted such killing. Since the role of the Catholic Church and Bishop Galen were public knowledge she did not go into any details about them. She did, however, write "Doctors who lived in that time knew how difficult it was to oppose and it was only in secret and by taking passive individual assistance that they could help." Professor Heyde, one of the early supporters of the euthanasia program, resigned in 1941, claiming that the program "had gone beyond its limits".¹²⁴ Many family doctors avoided hospitalizing patients so that they could not be sent to the 'killing centers.' Passive resistance was practiced by numerous directors of asylums once they recognized the implications of transferring patients. In some places doctors and psychiatrists cooperated with families to have a patient discharged or, if financially feasible, to have them transferred to private clinics out of the reach of the T4 Program. Other doctors re-diagnosed patients so that they no longer met T4 criteria. This ran the risk of exposure if Nazi zealots from Berlin conducted inspections.¹²⁵ Dr. von Platen observed that

Today it is easy to say that the doctors should have quit. But it is hard to say that the asylum doctors could have done more. ... The near totality of the psychiatrists, with the exception of the ideologically indoctrinated psychiatrists of the Party, knew that the practice of euthanasia meant the death of psychiatry and the permanent destruction of the confidential relationship between doctor and patient.¹²⁶

Professor Heyde and Viktor Brack told of meeting with three university professors in order to gain their support. Only Professor Ewald of Gottingen refused to collaborate.¹²⁷ Appreciation should be expressed to Professor Buchner, a pathologist at Freiburg who organized students to protest euthanasia and the film *Ich klage an* (*I Accuse*).¹²⁷

The personnel during this time suffered important neurotic problems. Nurses cried continuously. Secretaries tried to leave and welcomed their pregnancy.¹²⁸ In Keil, the world renowned neurologist Professor Hans Gerhardt Creutzfeldt (of Jakob - Creutzfeldt disease) managed to save nearly all of his patients and is said to have lectured openly against the evil of euthanasia.¹²⁹

Dr. von Platen concludes her book by writing:

I wanted this writing to present certain aspects of tragedy euthanasia made in Germany. It is in itself only a small chapter in the immense tragedy of National Socialism. It became important to put black on white in a precise and documented manner, the facts as they appeared and to bring together in a single volume the documents, unfortunately too rare, which have been found. Only an in-depth knowledge of that which transpired can allow for a change in orientation with regard to the past, where the fault of Germany, as to the dissolution of all established values, was heading. It is to be wished that Germany be allowed to contribute to the reconstruction of Europe and of European science, which could erase this fault of the past.¹³⁰

Lessons for the Present

The conflicts that Dr. von Platen so courageously exposed in her 1948 book resonate today, in the present time. This present exists not only on a beautiful April weekend in Portland, Oregon but also while I write these pages and especially while you, the reader, examine them. In writing her book Dr. von Platen encountered great resistance and disapproval from the German medical establishment. It took forty-five years for her book to be re-published and then only because of the subsequent publication of books by Klee, Kaul, Nowak, Reitlinger, and others^{21, 30} helped to break the silence in Germany. Once her book reappeared in 1993 Dr. von Platen became a heroic figure throughout Germany and Europe. Her exploits and influence remains more obscure here in the United States. Dr. Robert Jay Lifton, author of *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Killing*, goes to great length to interview as many German physicians as possible as long as they were involved in medical killings or the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial. Yet nowhere in his 571 page book, published in 1987, does he make any mention of the work of Dr. von Platen or that she was the first to write about the killing of the mentally ill in Germany. Thus, this small chapter in the larger Garaventa Center 2010 Conference tries to bring my interpretation of an English translation of the French translation of her book originally written in German in hopes that a larger audience can benefit by being exposed to her courage, honesty and wisdom. The specific lessons for the present that I shall explore include:

- 1) how America's current War on Terror finds parallels in the type of Nazis thought exposed by Dr. von Platen;
- 2) how our new interest in genetics has the possibility of leading to a path similar to the one that the "pseudo-science" of eugenics once trod; and
- 3) how important is the role of American physicians in both promoting awareness of the

great economic danger that rising health care costs pose to our country and, more importantly, the role physicians have in reversing that danger.

In 2009 George Annas, the doyen of American Bioethicists, published an article entitled “The Legacy of the Nuremberg Doctors’ Trial to American Bioethics and Human Rights.”¹³¹ He discusses Nuremberg and Bioethics, Nazi Doctors and American Bioethics, Health Law, Bioethics and Human Rights, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Equality and Genomics, the Risk of Genism and he concludes with Visions of the Future. Professor Annas argues that, “modern bioethics was born at the Nuremberg Doctors’ Trial, a health law trial that produced one of the first major human rights documents: *The Nuremberg Code*. Accepting this conclusion has significant consequences ... generally and more specifically in the context of our continuing global war on terror in which the United States uses physicians to help in interrogations, torture, and force feeding hunger strikes.”¹³¹ Annas contends that World War II and the Nuremberg Trials were “the crucible in which both human rights and bioethics were forged, and they have been related by blood ever since.”¹³¹ This relationship helps in answering the recent question raised by Elie Wiesel, former concentration camp prisoner at Dachau and Buchenwald and Noble Peace Prize laureate. After learning of the contemporary torture at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay Wiesel asked “Why the shameful torture which Muslim prisoners were subjected by American soldiers ... [has not] ... been condemned by legal professionals and military doctors alike?”¹³¹ The disregard the United States Government has shown in the first decade of the twenty-first century to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and *The Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War* led Professor Annas to declare:

It is, I think, the ability to see the enemies as less than human that permits us to engage in inhuman acts without acknowledging that guilt at least to ourselves. This was also the primary theory behind Nazi eugenics — that there were certain lives not worth living and that it was justifiable to sterilize and ultimately euthanize those who fit this category.¹³¹

Because of the racist, Nazi connotations associated with eugenics, many who have kindly reviewed this paper for me agree with Professor Annas’s claim that “it seems unlikely that concentration camp-based racist eugenics are likely to recur.”¹³¹ After all, as Annas notes, “Contemporary genetics, and genetic screening seem much more benign.”¹³¹ Yet Dr. James Watson, the Nobel laureate and co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, caused shock waves in scientific and public circles when in a 2007 newspaper interview he said “I’m inherently gloomy about the prospects of Africa [because] all our social policies are based on the fact that their intelligence is the same as ours — whereas all the testing says not really.”¹³² Faced with a fire storm of criticism Dr. Watson quickly apologized and acknowledged that “there is no scientific evidence to differences in intelligence among races.”¹³³ Not satisfied with Dr. Watson’s apology, *Nature* magazine noted that his remarks were “rightly deemed beyond the pale,” but more importantly it warned that “there will be important debates in the future as we gain fuller understanding of the influence of genetics on human attributes and behavior. Crass

comments by Nobel laureates undermine our very ability to debate such issues, and thus damage science itself."^{134, 135}

Annas contrasts 'racism,' defined as "the theory that distinctive human characteristics and abilities are determined by race"¹³⁶ with 'genism' which he defined as "the theory that distinctive human characteristics and abilities are determined by genes."¹³¹ His [Watson's]view results in a "discrimination as pernicious as racism. Watson's ignorant remark was not one of an old time racist, but of a new-style 'genist.'"¹³¹ To prevent 'genism' from "taking over from where racism left off"¹³¹ Annas proposes first "genetic privacy must be protected" and second "pseudoscientific projects that purport to identify genetic differences between 'races' should be rejected."¹³¹

Dr. von Platen would surely applaud Professor Annas's vision of the future which warns against "making bioethics the servant of domestic politics," and not speaking out against "aggressive interrogations and forced feeding of hunger strikers" and helping to develop, "A globalized American bioethics, infused with human rights [that] would have to pursue global justice."¹³¹

The third lesson for the present that I would like to discuss is how the unsustainable escalating health care costs pose a terrible dilemma and a heroic challenge for the medical profession, which I have spent over fifty years proudly serving. In 2004 Dr. Edmund Pellegrino, renowned physician, bioethicist, and Master of the American College of Physicians, wrote, "[M]edicine is a sensitive moral weather vane. When its beneficent focus is blurred, it is time for a society to examine its own claim to moral probity."⁹ Dr. von Platen's work shows how the "moral probity" of German National Socialism changed the complex dilemma of euthanasia from a medical problem to a political one.

Now in the twenty-first century economic and entrepreneurial considerations seem for the medical decision making of some physicians much more important than medical and ethical considerations. Dr. H. Brody, writing in February of 2010, examines "Medicine's ethical responsibility for health care reform: The Top Five List."¹³⁷ Dr. Brody calls on all specialty societies to identify the top five candidates for each specialty that could be eliminated. These top five would consist of diagnostic tests, procedures, or treatments commonly ordered by members of each specialty that are among the most expensive services provided and have been shown by the latest available evidence to "provide no meaningful benefits." Not only would each specialty society identify their own top five candidates but they would also implement a plan to root out ineffective and/or wasteful procedures from clinical practice. Brody estimates that such a process would reduce health care expenditures by thirty percent without any adverse effect on the welfare of patients or the public.¹³⁷

As if on cue, in April of this year Dr. R.A. Deyo and his colleagues examined the major medical complications and cost associated with surgery for spinal stenosis in the elderly.¹³⁸ They documented that in Medicare patients from 2002-2007 the overall surgical rates for lumbar stenosis declined slightly while the rate of complex spinal fusion procedures in-

creased fifteen fold from 1.3 to 19.9 per 100,000 Medicare beneficiaries. The number of life threatening complications and re-hospitalization rates were significantly higher for patients having complex fusions as compared to those having simple decompressions alone. The mean adjusted hospital charges for simple decompressions was \$23,724 as compared with hospital charges of \$80,888 for complex fusion procedures, i.e. complex fusion procedures generated 3.4 times more in Medicare charges than did simple fusion procedures. The eminent orthopedic spine surgeon from Stanford, Dr. Eugene Carragee, predicted in 2005 that lumbar spinal fusions could become a “technology to be broadly applied with little general effect, at enormous cost, leaving again a still poorly understood pain process, the patient desperate and the system destitute.”¹³⁹

In a response to Dr. Deyo's article, Dr. Carragee, first notes that simple spinal decompression alone usually offers the best option for most elderly patients with lumbar spinal stenosis. He then documents that while Medicare usually pays surgeons \$600 to \$800 for simple spinal decompression it pays ten times more to surgeons who perform complex spinal fusions on patients with uncomplicated lumbar spinal stenosis. These payment discrepancies led Dr. Carragee to conclude “that as currently configured, financial incentives and market forces do not favor careful assessment before technologies are widely adopted. When applied broadly across medical care in the United States, the result is a formidable economic and social problem.”¹⁴⁰

Drs. Brody, Deyo, and Carragee, all in their own way, illustrate in broad terms the central role physicians play in escalating health care costs. Actions that come about from economic and entrepreneurial considerations act like “perverse retroviruses ... [that] transform moral DNA so drastically.”⁹ Certainly spinal surgery with fusion represents a very expensive medical procedure both in terms of physician charges and hospital charges. When patients do not have good results the health care costs increase dramatically. Some call Health Grades the nation's most important independent grading system. In its 2010 report on hospitals and physicians, Health Grades looked at 5,000 hospitals in America; 1309 of these hospitals reported performing back and neck surgery (spinal fusion) in the years 2006 through 2008. Health Grades rated the hospitals that performed spinal surgery with fusions and gave each one either a five star rating for excellent results, a three star rating for expected results, and a one star rating for poor results.¹⁴¹ The results were: 238 (18%) had five star ratings; 833 (64%) had three star ratings; and 238 (18%) had one star results. Among hospitals that are known throughout the country as “excellent teaching or university hospitals” as rated in the 2010 annual *U.S. News and World Report* publication, 20 had five star results, 78 had three star results and 42 had one star results. The fact that 238 hospitals, including 42 of the finest hospitals in America, have poor results when they do spinal surgery with fusions should cause great concern to all who wish to reduce health care costs. Effective ways must be found to let the good and decent spine surgeons, who work at these 238 hospitals reported to have poor results, improve their practices and results.

The undisputable fact that 238 hospitals in America, including eleven out of 14 of the “best”

hospitals have poor results when performing spinal fusions offer an incredible challenge and a rare opportunity to all who practice the art of medicine in the twenty-first century in the United States. The challenge consists in having each physician answer two questions: (1) can I develop within myself the integrity to admit that I, actively or passively, play a role in allowing the widespread use of spinal fusions to become such a threat to the survival of American society; and (2) can I develop within myself the courage to honestly discover why so many patients have poor results following spinal fusion. The opportunity presented by the current practice of spinal fusions can help each of us develop the wisdom (1) to successfully limit spinal fusions to those conditions which the fusion improves the condition of the patient and (2) to prevent its wider use which causes harm to patients, and as well causes harm to the practice of the profession of medicine, and to those practitioners who actively harm patients or who passively remain onlookers as harm is done to patients.

Answers to the Critical Question

In the beginning of this paper I posed a simple, although critical, question: "How can people, made in the image of God, develop the courage and wisdom to acknowledge and change the evil and immoral impulses and desires that lie within them." Four possible answers to this question arise from the following meditation by the Venerable Wu Ling:

"With the wish to help all beings, may all my thoughts, words and actions
be void of attachment and ego.
May they arise from compassion and wisdom,
and may they be imbued with patience and joy."¹⁴²

1) Gandhian: Gandhi understood that conflict was an essential part of the human condition and did not think that it could be removed from human endeavors. He did think that the use of violence could be minimized and that an essentially nonviolent society could be achieved. He accepted the need for police power to maintain order but such police powers should not be equated with war making powers. He wrote: "Non-violence of my conception is a true battle against evil; it is a confrontation and not a device of tit for tat." Since violence does produce violence the Gandhian concept of non-violence offers the possibility that non-violence will produce non-violence.¹⁴³

2) Anabaptist Approach: John Howard Yoder, the foremost Anabaptist theologian of the twentieth century, student of Karl Barth, Professor of Christian Ethics in the Department of Theology at Notre Dame, and Teaching Fellow at Notre Dame's Joan B. Kroc Center for International Peace Studies offers a radical biblical approach to peace in these words:

Christians love their enemies because God does so, and commands his followers to do so. No one created in God's image and for whom Christ died can for me be an enemy, whose life I am willing to threaten or take, unless I am more devoted to something else — than I am to God's cause. ... [for Yoder the something else is] ... "a political theory, a nation, the defense of certain privileges, or my own personal welfare ... Since Jesus makes present the rule of God, it is clear that God's rule confronts evil non-violently." In so doing Jesus gave his disciples a new way of living by

- 1) dealing with offenders by forgiving them;
- 2) dealing with violence by suffering it;
- 3) dealing with a corrupt society by building a new order not smashing the old.¹⁴⁵

(The actions of Nurse Rita Fischer at Eichberg demonstrate how one person “silently but efficaciously” can offer an alternative to brutality and inhumanity.)¹²³

3) A Jesuit Approach: Father Raymond Helmick, the Emeritus Chairman of the Department of Conflict Resolution at Boston College, gave a speech in 2007 entitled *Seeing the Image of God in Others: Key to Transformation of Conflicts*. In an interview with the Boston Globe afterwards Father Helmick reflected on the resolution of the Northern Ireland conflict by saying: “In the Irish case, clergy who got up to talk about the conflict were inclined to tell their people ‘you are bigots, you are evil.’ Of course the people would say, ‘He doesn’t understand us.’ The only way to be successful for the preacher was to find what is the best in their people and appeal to that.”^{146, 147}

4) The Perverse Retrovirus Approach.⁹ If the cause of evil and immoral human behavior lies in forces found in the environment and not within ourselves then the solution lies in finding antidotes for the way the retroviruses of greed, anger, arrogance and ignorance transform our moral DNA. This requires human beings to: (a) acknowledge that they are infected with greed, anger, arrogance and ignorance; and (b) realize that generous giving of material things, teachings and fearlessness can counteract greed; (c) that compassion, when combined with wisdom, offers an effective antidote for anger; (d) that humility overcomes arrogance; and (5) that wisdom does remove ignorance. Because “The Kingdom of Heaven Lies within Us” these seeds of goodness also lie within each of us. When we conscientiously use them on a daily basis we help to resolve the conflicts that currently beset mankind.

I would like to thank:

- 1) Kathleen Massanari, Adjunct Professor of French Language at Goshen College, for her translation of the French edition of Dr. von Platen’s 1948 book, *The Killing of the Mentally Ill in Germany*.
- 2) I would also like to thank Gerhardt Reimer whose translation of German news clippings concerning Dr. von Platen from 1996 and 2006 helped to give a more complete picture of this remarkable woman.
- 3) In writing this paper, CONFLICTS FROM THE PAST; LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT, (ALICE VON PLATEN vs. KARL BRANDT) I owe a very deep debt of gratitude to my editor and wife, Gloria Smith-Carney. Her long term, multifaceted and deeply loving relationship with Countess Alice von Platen enabled me to meet and come to know this powerful, honest and courageous icon of her age.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ In Sophocles' *Antigone*, Creon, King of Thebes confronted by Antigone's disregard of his command says: "[W]homsoever the city may appoint, that man must be obeyed, in little things and great things, ... But disobedience is the worst evil. This it is that ruins cities, that makes homes desolate, ... Therefore we must support the cause of order, and in no ways suffer a woman to worst us. Better to fall from power, if we must, by a man's hand; than we should not be called weaker than a woman."
- ² Alice Ricciardi von Platen. *L'Extermination Des Malades Mentaux Dans L'Allemagne Nazie*. Editions Eres, 2001. 11, Rue des Alouettes, 31520 Ramonville Saint-Agne, p.37. www.edition-eres.com.
- ³ Ibid., p.105.
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- ⁵ M. Esther Harding. "The 'I' and the NOT 'I.'" *A Study in the Development of Consciousness*. Bollinger Series LXXIX Princeton University Press Princeton, N.J. 1973, p. 84-85.
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- ¹⁰ Florian Hildebrand. *Alice von Platen und die Geshichte ihres Buches*; Deutschlandradio Kultur; 13, 12, 2006.
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- ¹⁴ G. K. Chesterton. *Eugenics and Other Evils*. Cassall and Company Limited; London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne. 1922, p.7.
- ¹⁵ Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunal under Control Council Law #10. Nuremberg, Oct, 1946-April, 1949. Washington, D.C. U.S. G.P.O., 1949-1953.
- ¹⁶ Paul Weindling. "Obituary Alice von Platen". **The Guardian**; 13 March, 2008.
- ¹⁷ Rückblick auf die Nuernberger Artze-Prozesse vor 60 Jahren. IPPNW Nürnberg; 21 10, 2006.
- ¹⁸ Ulf Schmidt. *KARL BRANDT; Medicine and Power in the Third Reich; THE NAZI DOCTOR*. Humledon Continuum; London, 2007.
- ¹⁹ Father Sebastian Weih. Testimony on Jan. 30, 1947. Harvard Law School Library: Nuremberg Trial Project; item # 2694.
- ²⁰ Dr. I. Ervien. Testimony Feb. 11. 1947. Harvard Law School Library. Nuremberg Trial Project. Item #2698.
- ²¹ Von Platen, p. 19-20.
- ²² Medizin und Gewissen. 50 Jahre nach dem Nurenberger Aetzeprocess; 1996; IPPNW-Kongress in Nurnberg Presseinformation.
- ²³ As I write this in June, 2010, legislators in Arizona are trying, for their state, to repeal the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which automatically confers U.S. citizenship on anyone born in the United States. The lessons of the Holocaust, that terrible harm can be caused in excluding those who are not like us, has not been learned by those who value power more than humanity.
- ²⁴ von Platen, p. 7.
- ²⁵ von Platen, p. 10.
- ²⁶ von Platen, p. 12.
- ²⁷ von Platen, p. 13.
- ²⁸ von Platen, p. 15.
- ²⁹ von Platen, p. 19.
- ³⁰ von Platen, p. 21.
- ³¹ von Platen, p. 23.
- ³² von Platen, p. 25.
- ³³ von Platen, p. 26.
- ³⁴ von Platen, pp. 27-28.
- ³⁵ von Platen, p. 29.
- ³⁶ von Platen, p. 33.
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- ⁴⁰ von Platen, 42.
- ⁴¹ von Platen, 43.
- ⁴² Robert Jay Lifton. *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*. Basic Books: New York, New York: 1986, p. 64.
- ⁴³ von Platen, p. 46.
- ⁴⁴ von Platen, p. 47.
- ⁴⁵ Gita Sereny. *INTO DARKNESS*: Pimlico Press 1974, p. 48.
- ⁴⁶ Hitler. *MEIN KAMPF*, p. 447.
- ⁴⁷ von Platen, p. 51.
- ⁴⁸ Ian Kershaw. "HITLER 1936-45. Publisher Allen Lane: London, p. 427.
- ⁴⁹ Lifton, p. 67.
- ⁵⁰ von Platen, p. 54.
- ⁵¹ United States Holocaust Museum.
- ⁵² Mahatma Gandhi. Famous Quotes.
- ⁵³ von Platen, p. 55.
- ⁵⁴ von Platen, p. 56.
- ⁵⁵ von Platen, p. 57.
- ⁵⁶ von Platen, p. 58.
- ⁵⁷ von Platen, p. 60.
- ⁵⁸ von Platen, p. 62. Note #14 demonstrates that G.K. Chesterton foresaw how people like E. Melzner would act.
- ⁵⁹ von Platen, pp. 68-69.
- ⁶⁰ von Platen, p. 70.
- ⁶¹ von Platen, p. 71.
- ⁶² von Platen, p. 72.
- ⁶³ von Platen, p. 73.
- ⁶⁴ von Platen, p. 75.
- ⁶⁵ von Platen, p. 75.
- ⁶⁶ von Platen, p. 77.
- ⁶⁷ von Platen, p. 78.
- ⁶⁸ von Platen, p. 83.
- ⁶⁹ von Platen, p. 86.
- ⁷⁰ von Platen, p. 87.
- ⁷¹ von Platen, p. 88.
- ⁷² von Platen, p. 89.
- ⁷³ von Platen, p. 90.
- ⁷⁴ von Platen, p. 91.
- ⁷⁵ von Platen, p. 92.
- ⁷⁶ von Platen, p.93.
- ⁷⁷ von Platen, p. 95.
- ⁷⁸ von Platen, p. 96.
- ⁷⁹ von Platen, p. 98.
- ⁸⁰ von Platen, p. 99.
- ⁸¹ von Platen, p. 101.
- ⁸² von Platen, p. 109.
- ⁸³ von Platen, pp. 107-08.
- ⁸⁴ von Platen, p.108.
- ⁸⁵ von Platen, p. 109.
- ⁸⁶ von Platen, p. 110.
- ⁸⁷ von Platen, p. 111.
- ⁸⁸ von Platen, p. 113.
- ⁸⁹ von Platen, p. 115.
- ⁹⁰ von Platen, pp. 116-17.
- ⁹¹ von Platen, p. 118.
- ⁹² von Platen, p. 118.
- ⁹³ von Platen, pp. 118-20.
- ⁹⁴ von Platen, pp. 123-24.
- ⁹⁵ von Platen, p. 125.
- ⁹⁶ von Platen, p. 126.

- ⁹⁷ von Platen, p. 127.
- ⁹⁸ von Platen, p. 128.
- ⁹⁹ von Platen, p. 129.
- ¹⁰⁰ von Platen, pp. 130-31.
- ¹⁰¹ von Platen, p. 131.
- ¹⁰² von Platen, p. 132.
- ¹⁰³ von Platen, pp. 133-34.
- ¹⁰⁴ von Platen, pp. 135-37.
- ¹⁰⁵ von Platen, p. 138.
- ¹⁰⁶ von Platen, p. 139.
- ¹⁰⁷ von Platen, p. 146.
- ¹⁰⁸ von Platen, pp. 140-42.
- ¹⁰⁹ von Platen, pp. 142-43.
- ¹¹⁰ von Platen, p. 144.
- ¹¹¹ von Platen, p. 145.
- ¹¹² von Platen, p. 146.
- ¹¹³ von Platen, p. 147.
- ¹¹⁴ von Platen, pp. 147-48.
- ¹¹⁵ von Platen, pp. 148-49.
- ¹¹⁶ von Platen, pp. 149-50.
- ¹¹⁷ von Platen, p. 150.
- ¹¹⁸ von Platen, pp. 151-52.
- ¹¹⁹ von Platen, p. 153.
- ¹²⁰ von Platen, pp. 153-55.
- ¹²¹ von Platen, pp. 155-56.
- ¹²² von Platen, pp. 156-60.
- ¹²³ von Platen, p. 160.
- ¹²⁴ von Platen, p. 161.
- ¹²⁵ von Platen, p. 162.
- ¹²⁶ von Platen, pp. 162-63.
- ¹²⁷ von Platen, p. 167.
- ¹²⁸ von Platen, p. 168.
- ¹²⁹ Lifton, p. 82.
- ¹³⁰ von Platen, p. 7.
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- ¹³³ Rajeev Syal, *Nobel Scientist Who Sparked a Row Says "Sorry, - I Didn't Mean It"*, **THE TIMES** (London), Oct. 19, 2007, p. 19.
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- ¹³⁷ H. Brody. *Medicine's Ethical Responsibility for Health Care Reform: the Top Five*. NEJM, 362: 2010, p. 83-85.
- ¹³⁸ R.A. Deyo, et al. *Trends, Major Medical Complications, and Charges Associated with Surgery for Lumbar Stenosis in Older Adults*. JAMA 903, p. 1259-65. 2010.
- ¹³⁹ E. J. Carragee. *The Surgical Treatment of Disc Degeneration: Is the Race not to the Swift?* **Spine Journal** 5: 2005, p. 587-88.
- ¹⁴⁰ E. J. Carragee. *The Increasing Morbidity in Elective Spinal Stenosis Surgery: Is it Necessary?* JAMA 903, 2010, p. 1309-10.
- ¹⁴¹ www.healthgrades.com search the hospital listing and look up any state. Call up all cities and then see how many hospitals in that state do spinal surgery with fusion. The results will show which hospitals have five, three and one star ratings.
- ¹⁴² The Venerable Wu Ling. www.abuddistperspective.org/venerable-wuling
- ¹⁴³ Mahatma Gandhi. **Young India**. June 14, 1925.
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- ¹⁴⁶ Rich Barlow. *Understanding the Enemy is Key to Peace*. **Boston Globe**. May 5, 2007.
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THE NARROW PATH

SS MORALITY AND THE MEMOIRS OF RUDOLPH HÖSS

■
BY MORGAN REMPEL

I. Introduction

That words such as “hard” and “duty” appear regularly in the wartime speeches of Heinrich Himmler to Schutzstaffel — the SS — leadership hardly seems remarkable. More remarkable, perhaps, is the fact that references to “morality” and “decency” also recur in Himmler’s rhetoric. Indeed, to those unfamiliar with the inner ideological universe of the Third Reich, and particularly of the SS, it is tempting to think of Himmler — leader of the SS and principal architect of the “Final Solution” — as someone devoid of any morality whatsoever. While certainly understandable, closer examination reveals that such an understanding of the Reichsführer and his dreaded SS is simply incorrect and does little to advance our understanding of their genocidal ideology. The fact of the matter is that Himmler was an agent of SS morality — a morality which derived its principles from National Socialist racial ideology. Furthermore, he repeatedly endeavored to articulate and inculcate this morality into the ranks of the SS.

After clarifying the precise and idiosyncratic manner in which Himmler employs such concepts as “hardness,” “morality,” and “decency,” the matter of Rudolf Höss, SS officer and Commandant of Auschwitz from 1940 through late 1943 will be examined. The case will be made that with respect to both the “morality” and “hardness” on display in Höss’s memoirs, the unrepentant Commandant of Auschwitz comes frighteningly close to embodying Himmler’s vision of the ideal SS killer.

II. Himmler’s Advancement of SS Morality

Himmler’s notorious October 1943 speech to high-ranking SS men in Posen, Poland is certainly one of the more revealing documents vis à vis the Reichsführer-SS’s moral worldview.¹ Towards the end of this pedantic three-hour address, Himmler discusses the matter of wealth taken from Jews.

The wealth they had we have taken from them. I have issued a strict order ... that this wealth in its entirety is to be turned over to the Reich, as a matter of course. We have taken nothing from them for ourselves. Individuals who transgress will be punished in accordance with an order that I issued at the beginning, threatening that whoever takes so much as one mark for himself is a dead man. A number of SS men have offended against this order. They are very few, and they will die, without mercy. We had the moral right; we had the duty to our people to do it, to kill this people which wanted to kill us. But we do not have the right to enrich ourselves with even one fur, with one mark, with one cigarette or anything else. That we do not have ... All in all, however, we can say that we have carried out this

heaviest of our tasks in a spirit of love for our people. And our inward being, our soul, our character has not suffered any injury from it.²

Historian Richard Breitman says of this astonishing passage: “The architect of mass murder remained in his own eyes a moralist to the end.”³

The ethical component of this portion of Himmler's Posen speech is interesting for several reasons. First, most obviously, the Reichsführer-SS here speaks directly of the morality according to which he and his SS underlings are to live. And in doing so, he employs the language of traditional ethical discourse such as “moral right” and “duty.” Second, the Posen speech appeals to the familiar moral justification of self-defense to explain and justify the extermination of European Jewry. While the murder of millions of unarmed civilians may strike our ears as a misuse of the notion of justified killing in the name of self-defense, Himmler genuinely seemed to believe that so-called International Jewry represented a threat to the German people and culture. Even if Himmler did not actually believe in this (to us, absurd) cornerstone of National Socialist ideology (and I believe he did) it does seem clear that he genuinely endeavored to instill this moral ideology in the SS. Third, like many moralities, Himmler's SS ethics serves as the foundation for both negative and positive injunctions; pronouncements concerning what the SS *have* a moral right and duty to do, and what they *do not* have the right to do. In this case, the SS is explicitly said to have the “moral right” and “moral duty” to kill Europe's Jews. Note that in the very next sentence Himmler is equally explicit concerning the fundamental immorality of SS men personally enriching themselves — “with even one fur, with one mark, with one cigarette” — during the war against the Jews. Such is the extraordinary moral universe of Himmler's SS; where the killing of Jewish men, women, and children is a difficult but emphatically “moral duty,” while taking even the smallest of their victims' possessions for themselves is a crime punishable by death.⁴

This strange dynamic is also evident in a three-page memorandum Himmler issued earlier in 1943 detailing how executions are to be carried out in the camps. Insisting that SS men involved in executions, “be influenced in such a way as to suffer no ill effect in their character and mental attitude,” the Reichsführer instructs: “The responsible SS leaders are to see to it that, while we have to be hard and cannot tolerate softness, no brutality is to be allowed either.”⁵ Here again Himmler wishes to distinguish between behavior his SS morality condones (in this case, the “hardness” necessary to carry out their difficult task) and that which it explicitly condemns (“brutality”). Himmler, of course, knew very well that brutality, cruelty, and sadism were widespread within the concentration camps and that such behavior generally went unpunished. Yet this was a moral ideal he endeavored to impart to the SS. On occasion, SS men — even those actively involved in genocide — were indeed prosecuted for “excessive brutality” and the “unauthorized killing” of Jewish prisoners.⁶

While this emphasis on moral duty sounds vaguely Kantian, for Himmler, acting dutifully is less a matter of acting in accord with the dictates of *reason* than acting in accord with the controlling bias of *race*. The SS man's ultimate moral duty is to the *Volks* — those of German

blood — and to the *Führer* (concepts rendered almost inseparable by Nazi propaganda). As the Reichsführer-SS makes clear in his Posen speech:

One basic principle must be absolute for the SS man: we must be honest, decent, loyal, and comradely to members of *our own blood* and to nobody else. What happens to the Russians, what happens to the Czechs, is a matter of total indifference to me ... Whether the other nations live in prosperity or starve to death like cattle interests me only in so far as we need them as slaves to our Kultur; otherwise it is of no interest to me ... This is what I want to instill in the SS and what I believe I have instilled into them as one of the most sacred laws of the future: Our concern, *our duty* is to our people and our blood.⁷

From the vantage of SS racial ideology, acting morally is reducible to acting dutifully. And “duty” here is to be understood both in the abstract sense of doing what one has been commanded to do (no matter how difficult), and more specifically, in terms of one’s duty to do *whatever* is necessary for the survival and thriving of one’s people (as understood by Hitler and Himmler). It is important to underscore the fact that while this conception of moral duty is vile and shocking to our sensibilities, it is nonetheless a *moral* vision — a morality drawn from a specific racial ideology. Moreover, this moral vision is one that the tireless Reichsführer was at pains to articulate and impart to the SS (particularly as the tide of war began to turn against Germany). To think of Himmler and his SS ideology otherwise, as somehow operating outside of any moral framework, is to misunderstand an ideological cornerstone of the Third Reich and its attempted “Final Solution.”

III. Hardness and Decency: Core Components of SS Morality

Given the unprecedented crimes against humanity perpetrated by his SS, one could be forgiven for assuming that Himmler’s repeated wartime appeals to “hardness” must be less problematic than his peculiar employment of the concept “moral.” Such an assumption, however, does not withstand closer scrutiny. In an oft-quoted portion of his Posen speech, Himmler speaks candidly of the unique and difficult assignment common to those gathered:

I also want to talk to you quite frankly on a very grave matter ... the extermination of the Jewish race ... Most of you must know what it means when 100 corpses are lying side by side, or 500, or 1,000. To have stuck it out and at the same time — apart from exceptions caused by human weakness — to have remained decent fellows, that is what has made us hard. This is a page of glory in our history which has never been written and is never to be written.⁸

Here then, is a glimpse of the Reichsführer’s chilling vision of the hoped-for psychology of those directly involved in the machinations of genocide. Himmler associates one’s ability to remain a “decent fellow” under such circumstances with his much lauded “hardness.” A clue to better understanding both his ideal of “hard” but “decent” killers and his veiled reference to undesirable “exceptions” to this ideal can be found in a 1944 speech, also delivered in Posen, where the Reichsführer-SS again touches on this same strange constellation of ideas. On this occasion, immediately after his unnerving explanation of why Jewish women and children

must be part of the extermination program, Himmler boasts of the mental well-being of the SS.

We were forced to come to the grim decision that this people must be made to disappear from the face of the earth. To organize this assignment was our most difficult task yet. But we have tackled it and carried it through, without — I hope gentlemen, I may say this — without our leaders and their men suffering any damage in their minds and souls. The danger was considerable, for there was only a narrow path between the Scylla of their becoming heartless ruffians unable any longer to treasure life, and the Charybdis of their becoming soft and suffering nervous breakdowns.⁹

What are we to make of this unsettling characterization, complete with references to Greek mythology, of the “dangerous” and “difficult” task before his SS killers?¹⁰ It seems that Himmler recognizes that to *not* experience basic human sympathy while directly involved in the day to day murder of civilians, including women and children, would indeed be worrisome. The almost inconceivable task before his SS executioners was to navigate the “narrow path” between becoming unfeeling automatons “unable any longer to treasure life,” and mentally collapsing from excessive emotion — becoming too “soft.” Put differently, the uncanny ideal Himmler seems to set before his men was to retain the ability *to act* with the hardness necessary to complete their difficult genocidal assignment, but still remain “decent” men, *inwardly* capable of experiencing basic fellow feeling. Were it not for the experiences and recollections of men like Rudolf Höss, it would be reasonable to conclude that Himmler’s ideal was simply a matter of odious rhetoric.

IV. Rudolf Höss: Appropriation of SS Morality

Something that separates Rudolf Höss from other key figures in the Holocaust is the fact that he reflects upon his life and career, including his three and a half years as Commandant of Auschwitz, in his memoirs (written in late 1946 and early 1947 while awaiting trial in Poland). Certainly, a thorough discussion of the reliability of this strange document falls beyond the scope of this paper. Primo Levi, for example, while by no means entirely trusting of all of Höss’s recollections, characterizes his memoirs as “substantially truthful.”¹¹ The same can seemingly be said of his interrogations at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg in 1946, and at his trial in Poland in 1947. Höss, particularly in comparison with other perpetrators of Nazi crimes, is remarkably candid, forthcoming, and detailed in his recollections. And while it is important to remind ourselves that we are dealing with a self-serving memoir, for those interested in the matter of Höss’s *self-image*, particularly his understanding of his role in genocide, it is a singularly revealing document.

Like Himmler, Höss was born in southern Germany in 1900 and brought up in a strict Catholic home. And like Himmler, he was officially too young to fight for his country in World War I. But unlike his eventual superior, Höss managed to join the army despite his age, and at sixteen found himself in combat.¹² He was wounded three times in the Great War, received two Iron Crosses, and was placed in command of his own cavalry unit when still seventeen. In 1919, like countless other displaced, disillusioned soldiers, Höss joined the paramilitary

Freikorps. He joined the fledgling Nazi party in 1922 — not so much from anti-Semitism, he tells us, but ardent nationalism. Because of his involvement in the 1923 murder of an ex-*Freikorps* member suspected of being a communist spy, Höss was sentenced to ten years in prison. He served only five years.¹³ Of his regimented life as a prisoner, Höss writes:

I had been taught since childhood to be absolutely obedient and meticulously tidy and clean; so in these matters I did not find it difficult to conform to the strict discipline of prison. I conscientiously carried out my well-defined duties. I completed the work allotted me, and usually more, to the satisfaction of the foreman (p.54).

It is this very constellation of values — absolute obedience; meticulousness; the determination to complete work assigned to him (by no means rare values among Germans of his generation) — that will serve Höss well as Commandant of Auschwitz.

After prison, Höss briefly explores life as a farmer, but in 1933, months after Hitler took power, he accepts Himmler's offer to join the SS: "Because," he says, "of the reasonably certain prospect of rapid promotion and the financial emoluments that went with it"(p.64). By 1934, Höss begins serving in the SS guard battalion at Dachau concentration camp. There, it was instilled in the former front-line soldier that camp prisoners were highly dangerous "enemies of the state," and that accordingly, SS service in the camps was vital to the protection of the German people (p.65). Höss will hold to these ideas for the rest of his life. Höss's responsibilities at Dachau steadily grow, and in 1936 he is promoted to the SS officer corps. It is at Dachau that Höss first witnesses the whipping of prisoners. He devotes several pages of his memoirs to describing the men being punished and the corporal punishments meted out to them. Most interesting perhaps is Höss's reported reaction to the floggings. He writes that the cries of the men made him "hot and cold all over," "made me shudder," and made "my flesh creep" (p.66). Höss asserts that at subsequent punishments, he would endeavor to stand in the rear of the ranks or leave the scene "before the actual whipping began" (p.67). Historian Ian Baxter writes of these experiences: "Outwardly, he was calm and composed, but occasionally he couldn't help but feel sympathy for the prisoners ... He was loyal, tough and ambitious, and he refused to let his emotions compromise his position within the SS."¹⁴

In 1938 Höss was transferred to the larger Sachsenhausen concentration camp. A year later, with the outbreak of World War II, the role and size of the concentration camp system began to change. Himmler and other SS policymakers began to look for sites in occupied Poland suitable for the establishment of larger camps capable of incarcerating the ever-growing ranks of "enemies of the state." A location in southern Poland, on the site of a former army barracks, was chosen, and in May 1940, Höss was appointed commandant of the still to be built Auschwitz concentration camp.

Initially conceived as a camp for political prisoners and prisoners of war, plans for the role of the Auschwitz facility change several times over the course of 1941 and 1942. Eventually the decision is made that Auschwitz would play an important role in the extermination of European Jewry.¹⁵ In a series of meetings with Himmler and Adolf Eichmann, Höss learns the details of his new genocidal assignment: a "difficult" but necessary task the Reichsführer-

SS emphatically characterizes in terms of self-defense. Höss paraphrases Himmler:

At first I thought of calling in a senior SS officer for this job, but I changed my mind ... I have now decided to entrust this task to you. It is difficult and onerous and calls for complete devotion notwithstanding the difficulties that may arise. The Jews are the sworn enemies of the German people and must be eradicated. Every Jew that we can lay our hands on is to be destroyed now during the war, without exception. If we cannot now obliterate the biological basis of Jewry, the Jews will one day destroy the German people (p.183).

In very short order, Höss sets about making the necessary preparations for his camp's new murderous assignment. Facilities are expanded both at Auschwitz and the larger Birkenau facility nearby. Experiments with killing by means of poison gas are conducted using a group of Soviet POWs. Höss is clearly pleased with the results — both in terms of the speed and capacity of this killing method, and in his ability to improvise effective solutions to the challenges before him. Plans for dedicated gas chambers and new crematoria are commissioned. Revealingly, the thought of *refusing* to participate in the new vision for Auschwitz seemingly never crosses Höss's mind. "The order had been given, and I had to carry it out."¹⁶

In early 1942 the first Jewish transports arrive at Auschwitz. Höss's memoirs go on to describe, in often-excruciating detail, what might be called the learning curve of genocide. Through trial and error, Höss and his men develop expertise in, among other things: keeping prisoners calm prior to entering the gas chambers; the most efficient number of people gassed at once; running the crematoria up to twenty four hours a day while minimizing damage to the ovens; dealing with the daily supply of corpses when the supply outstrips the capacity of the crematoria. Newer, larger facilities are built; bottlenecks in the process are sorted out. The killing capacity of Auschwitz-Birkenau steadily increases. Höss boasts that he is not the sort of commandant who administers his camp from a desk, and that to set an example he was willing "to be present at whatever task I assigned to my subordinates" (p.114). Accordingly, he observes as trains arrive with new prisoners; he watches as families are separated; as men, women, and children undergo the selection process by SS doctors. He stands with his guards as prisoners are led into the gas chambers. On more than one occasion Jewish victims walking to their death look Höss in the eye while lamenting their fate.¹⁷ When asked by his men if the wholesale killing of women and children was truly necessary, Höss, like Himmler, appeals to the notion of the necessary self-defense of the German people.¹⁸

V. Höss: SS Morality Made Operative

This aspect of Höss's career and memoirs is painfully instructive. For unlike Hitler, Himmler, and Eichmann, Höss works daily at the crime scene. He witnesses the large-scale murder of men, women, and children day after day, year after year. He and his wife live and raise their children in a house from which the smoking chimneys of the crematoria can be seen. For Höss, the task of causing the Jewish people "to disappear from the face of the earth" was not an abstract notion. He sees, he hears, he smells the reality of this policy daily for almost three years.

Unlike many SS men involved in the day to day machinations of mass murder, Höss was

known for neither cruelty nor sadism. According not only to his memoirs but the testimony of prisoners and fellow SS men, Höss did his job industriously but did not take any obvious pleasure from it. Primo Levi, for example, calls Höss “a man who was not a monster and who never became one even at the height of his career at Auschwitz ... we can believe him when he claims that he never enjoyed inflicting pain or killing: he was no sadist, he had nothing of the Satanist.”¹⁹ On multiple occasions in his memoir, Höss asserts that the scenes of suffering he witnessed at Auschwitz affected him greatly. Like his early experiences with corporal punishment at Dachau, Höss was inwardly troubled by much of what he saw and what he did as commandant. He began drinking to excess; his relationship with his wife suffered and he had difficulty sleeping.

But while he may have been inwardly troubled by his genocidal assignment, Höss also repeatedly makes the point that as commandant, “the one to whom everyone looked” (p.154), he had to wear a mask of hardness in the face of the suffering all around him. “I was forced to bury all my human considerations as deeply as possible ... I had to observe every happening with a cold indifference” (p.155). More than once he says that while he found his job emotionally burdensome, the fact of the matter was that this was the grim assignment entrusted to him by Himmler and it was his duty to carry it out to the best of his ability. Writes Höss:

The Reichsführer SS sent various high-ranking Party leaders and SS officers to Auschwitz so that they might see for themselves the process of extermination of the Jews...I was repeatedly asked how I and my men could go on watching these operations, and how we were able to stand it. My invariable answer was that the iron determination with which we must carry out Hitler's orders could only be obtained by a stifling of all human emotions. Each of these gentlemen declared that he was glad the job had not been given to him (pp.154-55).

According to Höss, the fact that his British captors asked him if he ever considered *not* carrying out his genocidal assignment shows that they obviously had no idea what it meant to be a German officer in a time of war.

Since Himmler places an emphasis on the importance of his SS killers not losing their ability to “treasure life,” it is informative to note that evidence that Höss managed to avoid this pitfall is not limited to his recollections of the emotional burden the ceaseless demands of his job placed on him. Amazingly, it has been said of Höss that “outside of the camp he was a quintessential family man.”²⁰ Indeed, the only real regret expressed in his memoirs is that he did not spend more time with his wife and children during the war. Writing fondly of watching his children swim, Höss recalls: “But their greatest joy was when Daddy bathed with them. He had, however, so little time for all these childish pleasures. Today I deeply regret that I did not devote more time to my family. I always felt that I had to be on duty the whole time” (p.157). Strangely, reading his farewell letter to his children²¹ or accounts of his gentle character when alone with them,²² one gets the impression that Höss — self-described creator of “the largest human slaughter house that history had ever known”²³ — did indeed retain his ability to “treasure life.”

Höss's ability to live up to Himmler's ideal concerning the fundamental immorality of SS men's profiting personally from the extermination of Jews, however, is more problematic. On the general problem of thievery among the SS at Auschwitz, Höss writes:

The treasures brought in by the Jews gave rise to unavoidable difficulties for the camp itself. It was demoralizing for the members of the SS, who were not always strong enough to resist the temptation provided by these valuables which lay within such easy reach. Not even the death penalty or a heavy prison sentence was enough to deter them (p.196).

As noted, SS judge Konrad Morgen was sent to Auschwitz in late 1943 to investigate such abuses. Over a two-year period at various locations the "Bloodhound Judge" and his corruption commission led to more than 700 discharges and arrests.²⁴ Earlier in 1943, Morgen's investigation of the Buchenwald concentration camp resulted in the trial and execution of its commandant, Karl Otto Koch²⁵ (whom Höss revealingly characterizes as "a true gangster").²⁶ With respect to SS thievery at Auschwitz, Morgen's report notes: "The conduct of the SS staff was beyond any of the standards that you'd expect from soldiers ... They made the impression of demoralized and brutal parasites. An examination of the lockers yielded a fortune of gold, pearls, rings, and money in all kind of currencies." ²⁷

The matter of the commandant's own parasitism, however, is somewhat less clear. Höss himself writes: "My family, to be sure, were well provided for in Auschwitz. Every wish that my wife or children expressed was granted them" (p.156). According to prisoners who worked as servants in the Höss household it was well stocked with food, alcohol, cigarettes, linens, clothing, and furniture — much of which came from the doomed Jewish transports arriving at the camp. According to the testimony of Stanislaw Dubiel, gardener at the house, four railway cars were required to carry away its contents in December 1944.²⁸

Despite this, Höss did not think of himself — or at the very least, did not want others to think of him — as a common thief. During his interrogation at Nuremberg in 1946, for example, Höss boasted of the strict punishment meted out to SS men caught stealing prisoners' valuables at Auschwitz. Höss was asked if *he* were ever tempted to help himself to the treasure of his victims. His answer says much about his self-image: "What kind of man do you think I am?" he replied.²⁹

What are we to make of Höss's indignation? Perhaps he believed there was a meaningful distinction to be made between the goods supplied to his household and the cash, jewelry and dental gold Morgen found in the possession of SS men. Perhaps he was attempting to deceive his interrogators, himself, or both. What is known is that while a number of SS guards and officers at Auschwitz were arrested and tried for criminal activity in the wake of Morgen's investigation, no charges were brought against Höss. Whether this was because of an absence of evidence or support for Höss in Berlin, is unclear. In the wake of the investigation's findings, however, it was decided that Höss should leave Auschwitz. In December 1943 he was promoted to Chief of Department in direct charge of the administration of the concentration camps (Amtsgruppen D1) within the Economic and Administrative Main Office in Berlin. Still,

Höss's ties with Auschwitz were far from broken. His family continued to live in their Auschwitz home, and in May 1944 Höss was instructed by Himmler to return to the camp to coordinate the largest single action in its history; the extermination of the Jews of Hungary. Within eight weeks, "*Aktion Höss*" resulted in the murder of more than 320,000 Hungarian Jews.³⁰

VI. Conclusion

While it is tempting to think of Heinrich Himmler and his murderous SS as operating outside of any moral framework whatsoever, this paper has made the case that such a view is problematic. Considerable evidence exists that the Reichsführer *did* have a vision of SS morality and that he endeavored to instill this morality in his men. Without question, the moral vision articulated in Himmler's speeches and policies is abhorrent, uncanny and (at first glance, at least) contradictory. It is a moral vision in which the murder of unarmed civilians is characterized as a justified act of self-defense; where killers accustomed to seeing hundreds corpses lying side by side are applauded not only for their "hardness," but their ability to remain "decent fellows." It is a moral vision in which the killing of millions of men, women and children is Germany's "moral right" and "duty," but brutalizing or stealing from these victims is a crime punishable by death. It is a moral vision in which one's duty to one's own people is absolute while other peoples are compared to cattle. It is a moral vision wherein "corruption" investigations were carried out in human slaughter houses and where the task before those involved daily in genocide was to tread the narrow path between unfeeling savagery and excessive emotion.

Whether anyone could consistently live according to this strange moral worldview is doubtful. However, the example and memoirs of Rudolf Höss, creator and Commandant of Auschwitz, suggest that some SS killers appear to have come frighteningly close to embodying Himmler's ideal. While he may have fallen short of this ideal in some respects, in other key areas Höss translated this odious ideal into action. When told by Himmler of his genocidal assignment, Höss accepted the order without objection and dutifully fulfilled it to the best of his ability. He built and oversaw "the largest human slaughter house that history had ever known" (p.207) yet was known for neither sadism nor cruelty. He worked tirelessly to increase the killing capacity of Auschwitz, yet took great offense when asked if he was a thief. Höss orchestrated and personally witnessed the gassing and burning of countless women and children, yet has been characterized as a "quintessential family man."³¹ He acted with the *outer* hardness necessary to complete his genocidal task while *inwardly* retaining the capacity to treasure life. Assuming his reporting of his inner condition is essentially true, it appears that Rudolf Höss may indeed have succeeded in navigating Himmler's lauded "narrow path."

The examination of the SS moral ideal advanced by Himmler and appropriated by Höss in his role as Commandant of Auschwitz provides a perspective that makes it possible to better understand (or at least to situate) Höss's abiding self-image as a dutiful soldier and decent man. It seems appropriate then, to conclude with the chilling penultimate words of Höss's memoirs. "Let the public continue to regard me as the blood-thirsty beast, the cruel sadist and

the mass murderer; for the masses could never imagine the commandant of Auschwitz in any other light. They could never understand that he, too, had a heart and that he was not evil" (p.181).

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ENDNOTES

¹ Despite the Reichsführer's repeated references to discretion and secrecy with respect to the sensitive matters being presented, both an audio recording and Himmler's own notes of the speech survived the war, and constitute some of the most damning evidence regarding Nazi Germany's genocidal agenda (see Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991, p. 242).

² In Lucy Dawidowicz, ed., *A Holocaust Reader* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1976), pp. 133-34.

³ Breitman, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

⁴ It is important to note that stealing from Jews, not just on behalf of the state, but for self-enrichment was widespread at essentially every stage of the "Final Solution." As we see below, in 1943 Himmler ordered the formation of a commission to investigate and prosecute such abuses.

⁵ In Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, *Heinrich Himmler* (London: Greenhill Books, 2007 c.1965), p. 132.

⁶ One notorious case is that of SS Untersturmführer Max Täubner, brought before an SS and Police Supreme Court in May 1943. Surviving documents from this trial offer a unique glimpse of the uncanny moral and legal universe of the SS. Täubner and several men serving under him on the Eastern Front were not on trial because they killed Jewish civilians. Indeed, the verdict statement notes: "The accused shall not be punished because of the actions against the Jews as such. The Jews have to be exterminated and none of the Jews that were killed is any great loss" (in Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, & Volker Riess, eds., *The Good Old Days*. New York: The Free Press, 1988, p. 201). Rather, the accused were charged with killing Jewish civilians with "vicious brutality" and without "authorization". The verdict statement goes on to note that Täubner committed "cruel actions...unworthy of a German man and an SS officer", and that he

[A]llowed his men to act with such vicious brutality that they conducted themselves under his command like a savage horde. The accused jeopardized the discipline of the men. It is hard to conceive of anything worse than this. Although the accused may have otherwise taken care of his men, by his conduct he however neglected his supervisory duty which, in the view of the SS, also means not allowing his men to become psychologically depraved. The accused is therefore to be punished under section 147 of the MStGB" [Military Penal Code] (in Klee *et al.*, pp. 201-02).

The SS and Police Supreme Court has sentenced the accused to a total of ten years imprisonment. The accused has been expelled from the SS and declared unfit for service. The conduct of the accused is unworthy of an honorable and decent German man. For this he has been given under section 32 of the RStGB the additional sentence of ten years of deprivation of his civil rights (in Klee *et al.*, pp. 205-206).

The strange case of Max Täubner is examined by Yehoshua Büchler in "Unworthy Behavior" (*Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 17(3), 2003, 409-29).

⁷ Italics mine. In Dawidowicz, p. 131.

⁸ In William L Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1960), p. 966.

⁹ In Manvell and Fraenkel, p. 197.

¹⁰ In Greek mythology, Scylla and Charybdis were beastly dangers situated at opposite ends of the Strait of Messina.

¹¹ *Commandant of Auschwitz* by Rudolf Höss (Introduction by Primo Levi), (London: Phoenix Press, 1959), p. 19.

Noting that they are "consistent with other statements made by SS Corporal Pery Broad and the diary of SS Dr. Kremer, who also were at Auschwitz, and with personal accounts by prisoners in the essential facts," Paskuly likewise

characterizes Höss's memoirs as "essentially honest" (Steven Paskuly, ed. *Death Dealer*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1996, p. 21, p. 11).

Höss does, however, consistently downplay his freedom of choice and action. He repeatedly claims that he was given orders, and that he had "no choice" but to follow them. Höss may or may not have believed this, but the option *not* to follow orders, *not* to participate in genocide was indeed there. Moreover, while most of the material in his memoirs appears essentially truthful, Höss chooses to leave other material out altogether. He omits, for example, the criminal investigation that precipitated his departure from Auschwitz. In late 1943 SS Obersturmführer Konrad Morgen — SS officer, judge, and examining magistrate of the State Criminal Police — was sent to the camp to investigate reports of corruption. The matter of theft among the SS at Auschwitz is discussed below.

Höss also fails to mention Morgen's investigation of rumored sexual relationships between SS men and prisoners, including his own relationship with Elenore Hodys (an Austrian political prisoner and servant in Höss's house). Hodys told Morgen that she and Höss had had sexual relations on several occasions. Höss flatly denied such a relationship. Rees, for example, characterizes the entire matter as "fraught with difficulty" (Laurence Rees, *Auschwitz: A New History*. New York: Public Affairs, 2005, p. 193). Ultimately, no charges were brought against Höss.

¹² Fighting alongside the Turkish army, in and around the Holy Land, Höss witnesses the widespread sale of phony religious relics (by local merchants and members of the clergy). A self-described "devout Catholic", Höss is "disgusted" and "sickened" by the behavior of these "swindlers" and discusses this matter with a number of comrades (none of whom, he notes with disappointment, share his indignation). Höss concludes that, in retrospect, such immoral, predatory behavior against simple pilgrims likely contributed to his subsequent renunciation of his faith and any remaining thoughts of entering the priesthood after the war (Rudolf Höss, *Commandant of Auschwitz*, London: Phoenix Press, 1959, pp. 38-39). Unless otherwise noted, all Höss quotations are from this volume.

¹³ Of his involvement in the crime Höss boasts: "I was certainly there myself, but I was neither the ringleader nor the person chiefly concerned. When I saw, during interrogation, that the comrade who actually did the deed could only be incriminated by my testimony, I took the blame on myself..." (Höss, p. 44).

¹⁴ Baxter, p. 21.

¹⁵ The precise date of this decision is not entirely clear. Höss himself asserts:

In the summer of 1941, I cannot remember the exact date, I was suddenly summoned to the Reichsführer-SS ... Himmler received me without his adjutant being present and said in effect: "The Führer has ordered that the Jewish question be solved once and for all and that we, the SS, are to implement that order ... I have therefore earmarked Auschwitz for this purpose, both because of its good position as regards communications and because the area can easily be isolated and camouflaged" (Höss, p. 183).

Rees, however, suggests that Höss "misremembered" when this crucial conversation with the Reichsführer occurred. According to Rees the decision to task Höss and Auschwitz with large scale extermination was almost certainly made in 1942 (Rees, pp. 53-54). Baxter too notes that Höss "frequently attributes events that occurred in 1942 to the year 1941" (Baxter, p. xvii).

¹⁶ Höss writes:

The killing of the Russian prisoners-of-war did not cause me much concern at the time. The order had been given, and I had to carry it out. I must even admit that this gassing set my mind at rest, for the mass extermination of the Jews was to start soon and at that time neither Eichmann nor I was certain how these mass killings were to be carried out. It would be by gas, but we did not know which gas or how it was to be used. Now we had the gas, and we had established a procedure (p. 147).

¹⁷ Höss, pp. 149-51.

¹⁸ Höss writes: "I had to tell them that this extermination of Jewry had to be, so that Germany and our posterity might be freed for ever from their relentless adversaries" (p. 153).

¹⁹ Primo Levi, Introduction to *Commandant of Auschwitz* by Rudolf Höss (London: Phoenix Press, 1959), pp. 19-20.

²⁰ Baxter, p. xiv.

²¹ Shortly before his execution in April 1947, Höss wrote farewell letters to his wife and children. These letters can be found on pp. 189-195 of *Death Dealer* (ed. Steven Paskuly).

²² In a remark that testifies at once to Höss' ongoing ability to "treasure life" and the distinction Himmler draws between *outer* hardness in the name of duty and an SS man's *inner* condition, the housekeeper of fellow SS officer Georg Gussregen said of the Commandant:

Höss was an ideal man at home. He loved his children. He liked to lie down on a couch with them in their room. He kissed them and caressed them and spoke to them beautifully. However, he turned into a completely different person outside of the house" (in Baxter, p. 63).

²³ Höss, p. 207.

²⁴ Lasik, p. 294.

²⁵ Morgen found evidence that Commandant Koch was involved in "arbitrary killings," the theft of property taken from prisoners, and large-scale embezzlement. Koch was eventually tried, found guilty, and executed by the SS in

April 1945.

²⁶ In Paskuly, p. 309.

²⁷ In Rees, p. 191.

²⁸ Baxter, p. 161.

²⁹ Richard Sonnenfeldt, chief American interpreter at the Nuremberg trials writes of an unnerving interview with Höss: Nor was this commandant with the perfect memory hesitant to describe how his men extracted gold from the teeth of the dead (and sometimes the living), and how they collected jewelry to be processed, packaged, and indexed for depositing in the special SS Reichsbank vault in Berlin.

"Were any of these valuables ever stolen?" we asked.

"Yes", Höss said. "Once we caught several SS men with gold taken from victim's teeth and jewelry. I sent those criminals to a special concentration camp for SS men where they were punished, worse than Auschwitz. We never beat our prisoners at Auschwitz," he said.

Before he appeared as a witness, I asked him whether he had ever enriched himself with the victims' possessions.

Höss was visibly angry. "What kind of man do you think I am?", he replied (Sonnenfeldt, *Witness to Nuremberg*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2008, p. 68).

³⁰ See Rees, pp. 224-28.

³¹ Baxter, p. xiv.

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RESISTANCE AS REACTION

MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S
ANTI-TOTALITARIAN OFFSPRING



BY AARON D. HOFFMAN

Introduction

From an American perspective, the twentieth century is understood as the story of the political, social, and technological dominance by the United States and the triumph of freedom and democracy over the specters of fascism and communism. In this familiar narrative America is viewed, consciously or subconsciously, as the culmination of the ideals of Western civilization. Regardless of the messy historical details, many Americans look back upon the last century very fondly; some even look upon it with celebratory nostalgia.

There has arisen, however, an anxiety about the course of events of the first decade of the twenty-first century — a palpable disquiet about whether the consequences of the recent economic upheavals and the continuous war on terrorism signal a shift away from an American-centered world to a world that is more multi-polar at the expense of specifically American interests. Our anxiety, when looking over the past decade, proves how we have developed an expectation that the United States is to be the unrivaled world leader in economic production, military strength, and cultural impact. Any serious challenge to our power is viewed as an inversion of the natural state of things.

However, this uniquely American perspective on an America's natural role in the world is a narrative that is not shared by many political and philosophical thinkers who arose from the European intellectual tradition. Indeed for them the twentieth century was not a century of triumph but of tragedy and horror, and, if one associates the European experience with the experience of civilization itself, as European thinkers tend to do, then the twentieth century was not simply the “good old days” or the great American Century. Rather, the political and philosophical lessons of the twentieth century are wrapped in a story of calamity that needs to be understood so that its disasters can never be repeated. Rather than nostalgia, what is at stake is our ability to uphold and preserve the essence of civilization itself from the type of threats that emerged and nearly triumphed in the twentieth century.

The title of this paper is meant to convey the importance of the idea of resistance to the horrors of the twentieth century by a certain group of thinkers who come from the European intellectual tradition and, moreover, whose philosophical perspective is highly indebted to the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Martin Heidegger is best known today for two things, one distinguished and the other shameful. He is firstly remembered as a brilliant philosopher and author of many dense treatises that tackle the most profound existential questions facing human beings. When philosophers organize the history of philosophy into a list of essential writings, his book *Being and Time* is almost always recognized as one of the

canonical works of modern philosophy. Now if that were all that Heidegger was known for, his influence upon a generation of thinkers would be of little interest outside academic specialists in the fields of phenomenology and existentialism. Thinkers though are not only held accountable for their words but also for their deeds, especially a thinker such as Heidegger who was not the type of technical or artistic genius whose work can be divorced from his biography or his reaction to his historical circumstances. Because Heidegger had something profound to say about the human condition in the twentieth century and was expounding on the questions of what it means for actual human beings to live in the late modern world, his complicity with the Nazi government cannot be ignored. Heidegger will be remembered as a brilliant philosopher, but he will also be remembered for his public support of the Nazi Party and his lifelong refusal to openly disavow or even explain his endorsement and work as an academic administrator for the Nazi regime.

Heidegger's unabashed Nazi affiliations are a source of embarrassment for his admirers, a source of condemnation by his critics, and a source of continued fascination by some. His involvement with the Nazis leaves us a troubling set of questions. How could one of the most profound philosophical minds of our time also be a supporter of the genocidal politics of the Nazi regime? Should Heidegger be judged as an individual immoral person? Thus, was he just a bad man who was also philosophically brilliant? Was Heidegger an abstract minded academic who was lost amidst the political machinations of his time? Thus, was he a philosophical genius and yet a political fool? Or does Heidegger's Nazism arise from his philosophy? And thus, does his philosophy implicate and render his thought unfit for civilized discourse? These are the many questions that face anyone trying to come to terms with Heidegger as a thinker and as a man.

There has been an enormous recent growth in the literature on Heidegger's Nazism for those who are interested in delving into the topic, but it is beyond the scope of this study to assess all the labyrinthine debates surrounding Heidegger. Indeed a book could be written just about the books on Heidegger and Nazism. Instead, this paper will expand the scope of the questions about Heidegger beyond Heidegger himself to examine how a generation of thinkers who, although influenced by him, were able to separate his own personal immorality, his shameful political record, and those aspects of his philosophy most susceptible to totalitarian politics from what is truly valuable in his thought, and to find in the methodology and content of his work the resources for resistance to the totalitarianism of the twentieth century. The great irony of Heidegger's legacy is that so many thinkers who were personally influenced by his teachings used his influence to resist the type of politics that Heidegger so gladly endorsed. Even if one concludes that Heidegger's Nazism disqualifies his philosophical insights from serious contemplation, there were many others who used some of his philosophical notions to support a politics based on human freedom and dignity.

Those who wish to support and uphold liberal democracy, meaning a political system that protects basic rights, constitutional government, and various degrees of democratic political

participation, can benefit from appropriating the insights of those thinkers who used the philosophy of Martin Heidegger to resist the totalitarian politics of the twentieth century. The events of the twentieth century seemed for many supporters of liberal democracy to simply prove that the advantage of free government to any alternative was obvious without the need for any type of deeper theoretical exploration on the subject. One had only to look at the record of American and Western style governments against the alternatives of Nazism, Communism, or other repressive regimes to see that, as a matter of fact, there was no plausible alternative to free government that one could support. Still, if one wanted to use a more theoretical approach, then it was best to stick with Anglo-American liberal political thought that was free from any Continental associations (like Heidegger) that could be linked to the enemies of free government. This opinion is still held today, but, as a result, it neglects the intellectual resources available to supporters of liberal democracy, and, in the wake of the challenge to liberal democracy by terrorism, a richer theoretical articulation of democratic principles can only benefit the politics of freedom. One should not ignore the curious phenomenon of the followers of Martin Heidegger and their resistance to totalitarian politics.

The debate surrounding the character and philosophy of Heidegger will not be resolved in this study. What is beyond doubt, however, is that the philosophical teachings of Heidegger influenced many thinkers to resist the reoccurrence of totalitarian politics in the world. This is ironic considering Heidegger's membership in the Nazi Party and his unwillingness to apologize or even explain in any detail his support of Nazism. It is also doubly ironic that many of those who carried Heidegger's philosophy forward toward better and more admirable political goals were his Jewish students. Heidegger's writings addressed perennial philosophical questions, and the nature of these writings attracted a number of highly gifted and enthusiastic followers who took the framework and content of his work and pushed it toward a kind of thinking that was hostile to the totalitarian implications present in Heidegger's own character, actions, and writings.

Heidegger's influence helped his students and interpreters confront the enormous problems present in twentieth century politics and history. The thinkers who most successfully confronted these problems using resources found in Heidegger's philosophy include Hannah Arendt, Jacques Derrida, Hans Georg Gadamer, Hans Jonas, Emmanuel Levinas, Karl Löwith, Herbert Marcuse, Richard Rorty, and Leo Strauss. For them, Heidegger's philosophical questions were so fundamental that these questions acted as a catalyst for them to engage with perennial philosophical questions and also address practical questions of life during and after the Second World War. Heidegger also influenced Jean-Paul Sartre whose politics drifted in a direction hostile to the principles of liberal democracy and free government. This does indeed prove that there are many ways to carry forward the work of a thinker. However, the focus of this paper will be on the students of Heidegger who were able to offer political judgments that are hostile to totalitarian politics. These were the followers who allowed themselves to be influenced but also liberated from the pernicious aspects of Heidegger's thought. Hence, a price

had to be paid for this liberation. The radical and holistic nature of Heidegger's thought had to be fragmented and metaphysical elements present in the Western philosophical tradition that Heidegger wished to abandon had to be reclaimed. Liberation from Heidegger involved embracing, in one way or another, the modern Enlightenment tradition of freedom and democracy with all the political benefits that came from that tradition.

Heidegger's influence stems from the radical nature of his thought, radical in the sense of getting to the very root of the experience of existing in the world. That is why he is often labeled an existentialist philosopher. His thinking had a liberating quality for his followers. It was so liberating in fact that they were able to immerse themselves in his philosophical way of thinking while still maintaining their independence from the directions that he chose to take his thought.

Accounts of the Offspring of Heidegger

There has been recognition in many recent studies of Heidegger's followers that, in Richard Wolin's phrase, they sought to "philosophize *with Heidegger against Heidegger*."¹ Indeed, the appeal of Heidegger's thought is that it involves existential questions and phenomenological insights. Even a harsh critic of Heidegger like Wolin admits that Heidegger's philosophical manner has an appeal even today, because it makes philosophy connect to the world that we live in and experience in a concrete manner. Wolin writes that in contemporary philosophy,

[T]he existential concerns that occupied pride of place in Heidegger's rich phenomenological inquiries seemed banished from philosophy's horizons....

Prospects of reconnecting philosophy with the lifeworld or "everydayness" — the experiential basis of human society — so that it might thereby become meaningful once again, seem increasingly remote.²

The quintessential thinker who was most successful in marrying the philosophy of Heidegger and democratic politics was Hannah Arendt. Arendt combined Heidegger's philosophical insights with her own concerns stemming from her experiences as a displaced refugee from Nazism, a victim of anti-Semitism, and an enthusiastic supporter of the democratic promise inherent in America's political tradition. Arendt's life and work proves that Heidegger's influence can serve the cause of freedom and human dignity as long as it is severed from its tendency toward solipsism and obfuscation, and is instead redirected towards public freedom and human solidarity.

One has to separate the good from the bad in Heidegger's approach. There is a vast difference between the contours of radical thought and the needs and requirements of a life shared with others in the political and social realm. These realms operate in quite different spaces. Hannah Arendt's separation between contemplation and action best portrays this.³ The *vita contemplativa* [the contemplative life] is separate from the *vita activa* [the life of labor, work, and action]. Wolin writes Heidegger's students, including Arendt, that:

[A]mong her fellow students, there was general agreement that Heidegger's philosophical "radicalism" was in part the catalyst behind his political excesses.

Paradoxically, the element that accounted for his greatness — his insistence on

breaking with all inherited philosophical paradigms and traditions — also proved his undoing. His students realized that when uncompromising intellectual radicalism is transposed to the realm of politics and society, the results can be calamitous.⁴

Heidegger's radical thinking inspired his students to think freely and creatively. However, many of them recognized that this type of radical thinking needed to be contained in a separate space for philosophical contemplation or it could threaten the very needs of the political and social communities that are based on living with others. To make Heidegger's thought compatible with good political and social order, metaphysical notions have to creep back in, and the experience of reality has to be divided and structured. There is a realm of political action and social life that is separate from the life of thinking and contemplation. By not recognizing that, Heidegger transposed his destructive philosophical force to political and social communities that naturally need to be safe from destructive forces.

In Wolin's book *Heidegger's Children*, he critically assesses Heidegger's legacy on Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse. Though often hypercritical and agenda-driven, his study is valuable for understanding the influence of Heidegger upon students who both denounced and avoided his horrid political judgments. Even while differing with Wolin's condemnations and conclusions, the examination of his study reveals that Heidegger's followers had to become more metaphysical than Heidegger, because they recognized that his radical abandonment of the Western tradition threw out the benefits of freedom and dignity, and replaced it with the calamitous existential politics of Nazi Germany. Wolin shows how Heidegger's followers had to either circumscribe or alter his radical thinking in order to preserve responsible politics.⁵ Where Heidegger's thought wanted to destroy all metaphysical notions for the sake of an authentic existence, Arendt, Löwith, Jonas, and Marcuse rescued certain metaphysical concepts from Heidegger's knife.

Wolin writes that Karl Löwith retreated to a contemplation of the cosmos as opposed to an active involvement in the world.

Of course, by "cosmos" Löwith does not mean the heavens as an object of astronomical study. Instead his standpoint is phenomenological. He seeks to convey the Stoic idea of the paltriness of human concerns when viewed against the backdrop of the universe as something eternal. The risks and uncertainties of modern historical consciousness — in essence, the problem of nihilism that occupied center stage in the thought of Nietzsche and Heidegger — compel Löwith to return to a purely "theoretical" standpoint: the classical ideal of the *bios theoretikos*. The virtue of "contemplation" is that it stands apart from the busy-ness and folly of worldly involvements.⁶

The repositing of the classical philosophical ideal, that is the philosopher engaged in a purely theoretical standpoint apart from the world is Löwith's solution to the problem of meaninglessness in the modern world. Therefore, the philosopher is secured in a vantage point to contemplate rather than change the world.

Hans Jonas returned to the classical notion of there being a meaning and purpose in nature, a meaning and purpose that we as human beings need.⁷ Jonas concluded that Heidegger's

thinking was empty of substantive meaning and therefore relied on a type of formalism and decisionism without nature, bodies, or content.⁸ What this means is that Heidegger so radically takes apart the philosophical tradition that he leaves nothing left that is substantive about the person other than the formal act of making a decision for its own sake. One has to almost prove one's existence by throwing oneself into a cause or course of action. This train of thought is ripe for the type of commitment to the cause of National Socialism that Heidegger threw himself into during the 1930s.

Jonas wanted to rescue the notion of there being a meaning and purpose in nature, and the fact that we are physical beings living in a larger natural world that needed to be understood, respected, and preserved. Jonas, like Heidegger, distrusted technology but because of the possible damage that run-away technology could do to the natural environment. Like Löwith, Jonas would not abandon some important metaphysical concepts of the Western tradition but rather sought to make them adaptable and applicable to life in the twentieth century.

Wolin notes that Herbert Marcuse's lifelong affinity for certain aspects of Marxism made him immune to Heidegger's flights away from Western rationalism. For Marcuse believed that true philosophy needed to "*realize* the ideals of reason in a meaningful and worldly fashion."⁹ The existentialism represented by Heidegger devolved from a great philosophical inquiry into a thinking that allowed itself to be swallowed up by authoritarian powers.¹⁰ Marcuse felt that Heidegger had abandoned genuine philosophy and the worldly reason that followed from that philosophy.¹¹ Marcuse would borrow many of Heidegger's criticism of the Western tradition, but he refused to give up the hope that philosophy could change the world, that theory could dictate to practice.

To return to Hannah Arendt's use of Heidegger for good political goals, Wolin writes that Arendt formulated a type of political existentialism in a Heideggerian framework.¹² Though this is one part of her thinking, Wolin completely overplays Arendt's indebtedness to Heidegger without recognizing her independence from Heidegger and how she supported the goals of democratic politics. Arendt's understanding of politics was that political action existed in a public space where persons could engage in speech and debate. Her idea of politics owed much to her interpretations of the American Founding Fathers and the ancient Greek polis. For "Arendt, as opposed to Heidegger, found in Aristotle's concept of *praxis* the key to a new revaluation of human action as interaction unfolding within a space of appearances."¹³ Political action is interaction with one's fellow citizens in a political space.

Along with Löwith, Jonas, and Marcuse, Arendt was swept away by Heidegger's teachings and was taught to look at the philosophical tradition with fresh eyes. Heidegger was able to free his students from reigning dogmas and paradigms, and they were able to use this to reapropriate aspects of the tradition such as contemplation, nature, theory and *praxis*. In the end, despite all of his condemnations of Heidegger, Wolin does admit that Heidegger's existentialism promoted a special space for the thinking about ultimate values that was of use to his students. Wolin claims,

The “existential” paradigm initiated by Heidegger and refashioned by his intellectual heirs merits attention insofar as it has managed to preserve a distinctive manner of philosophical questioning, one of whose virtues is a willingness to remain out of sync with the predominantly utilitarian orientation of the “globalized” contemporary lifeworld. In a sense, then, the value of the existential tradition is as much “aesthetic” as it is “material.” It consists of an approach to thinking that refuses to be measured by instrumental criteria of use-value or effectiveness. In part, then, its value consists in the fact that it promotes a space for reflection about ultimate values or “ends” untainted by the pressures of “everydayness.” It thereby manages to recapture, however momentarily, the spiritual autonomy prized by the age of German classicism. Thus, as the theme of her last book, Hannah Arendt chose “the life of the mind” in order to emphasize a set of philosophical themes that endured above and beyond the changing winds of intellectual fashion.¹⁴

Arendt used this autonomy to fully engage the situation of life shared with other human beings. Heidegger’s philosophy, on the other hand, was solipsistic and therefore was only safe in the realm of private contemplation.

Heidegger’s anti-modernism is evident in his “prejudices against the modern world and its predominant political forms: individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, public opinion, and so forth.”¹⁵ Whereas Arendt supports modern political conceptions but reformulates them: (1) individualism which for Arendt can only truly flourish in the company of others; (2) liberalism of which, she claims, rights are best protected in participatory democratic-republicanism politics; (3) constitutionalism of which, Arendt claims, the focus should be on questions of the public good rather than the domination of concerns that are narrowly private or economic; and (4) public opinion which, for Arendt, is not to be based on polls or fashionable whims but on genuine political dialogue among equals.

Wolin writes that Heidegger does not favor public reason. He was “staunchly opposed to the values of public reason and, moreover, Heidegger self-consciously embraced the particularist standpoint of factual experience, which is always that of an individual self.”¹⁶ He also does not favor community, and “he is uninterested in problems of ordinary language. Such problems are *a priori* devalued insofar as they derive from the inferior sphere of ‘everydayness.’ This sphere, which has been colonized by the ‘they-self,’ can make no serious contributions to matters of philosophical substance. The standpoint of the *sensus communis*, he believes, can only mislead. For Heidegger, philosophizing is an intrinsically aristocratic enterprise.”¹⁷ Arendt used Heidegger’s language but changed the meaning of it, for she embraced the value of public reason as truly disclosive of authentic existence. Arendt did fear the effects of ordinary language’s being only about the trivial and the self-interested, but rather than abandoning an idea of a common sense altogether, she reformulated the idea of community to mean a dialogue among politically minded citizens discussing matters of the public good.¹⁸ Heidegger’s offspring were all able to use his language for better political ends.

Gregory Bruce Smith in his book, *Martin Heidegger*, also addresses how the followers of Heidegger were able to adapt his teachings to their own concerns and orientations.¹⁹ The difference between Smith and Richard Wolin is that the latter attacks Heidegger from the

perspective of the theory of Jürgen Habermas, whereas Smith reads Heidegger from the more conservative perspective of Leo Strauss. Smith's work though again shows that a politics of freedom depends upon certain metaphysical conceptions that need to be asserted and explicated.

If we look at how Smith traces Heidegger's influence, it becomes apparent how important it is to ascertain how Heidegger's notion of the meaning of the term *world* was adopted and appropriated by his followers. For Heidegger, the idea of world meant an "existential phenomenon" that was "understood ontologically."²⁰ The world is the "background horizon of meaning" of what is "absent or concealed."²¹ The world is not just some object out there and around us that we can simply perceive. It is what provides our very sense of meaning. Moreover the world is not simply a thing that one would look at as one looks at a map or a globe. The world for Heidegger is the almost quasi-mystical sense of existence and being. Where Heidegger used the idea of world in this way, his followers changed the emphasis in order to support more humanistic goals such as freedom and respect for the human person.

Smith claims that Jacques Derrida favored a deconstruction of language and thought in the attempt to combat any type of reification of human beings by the political or social order. Smith labels his thought as "Postmodern Cosmopolitanism."²² What was important for Derrida was the idea of *writing and difference*.²³ Derrida wanted to prove that there was no fixed meaning to texts or thought. His program involved a deconstruction "of the Western metaphysical, philosophic tradition" as "an ongoing necessity."²⁴ This was inspired by Heidegger's "*Destruktion*" of the Western tradition, which is "sorting one's way back through the sedimented layers of traditional thought."²⁵ Much nonsense and posturing can be written regarding deconstructionism, but regardless of the attempt to constantly take apart the Western philosophical tradition, it is the case that Derrida is firmly engaged in a humanistic enterprise to free the individual from political and social control. To that end, he has taken Heidegger's critical apparatus and applied it toward broadly revolutionary goals, though in a highly academic and abstruse manner.

Like Derrida, the American academic Richard Rorty used the concept of *irony* to deconstruct threats to individual personal fulfillment. Also like Derrida, Rorty carried with him much unarticulated yet definite political principles and beliefs about the preservation of the individual in a liberal democracy. Smith concludes that Rorty had a faith in progressive politics and also has certain "taste" commitments, such as his commitment to stamping out cruelty and supporting government policies that lead to social solidarity.²⁶ Heidegger's deconstruction of the Western philosophical tradition is used as a tool by Rorty to leave behind the pretensions of philosophy as representing the Truth about reality. Instead the goal of philosophy should be to embrace pragmatic progressive politics.²⁷

Unlike Rorty's progressivism, Leo Strauss sought to protect tradition-minded, religious-oriented political regimes from the perceived dangers to traditional morality and religion from philosophical skepticism. The idea of *regime* was very important for Strauss.²⁸ This idea of regime is based on a *praxis* which has its "basis in natural, pretheoretical perception" ...

[that is] ... “substantively moral, political, and religious” and autonomous and protected from modern theoretical criticism.²⁹ Strauss wanted to protect political regimes from the imposition of theoretical reason. In this endeavor, he adopted “Heidegger’s critique of Enframing and constructivism,” and interpreted it as meaning that reason wishes to control and impose its vision upon a political regime, but if the regime is left in its natural state it will be hierarchical and healthy.³⁰

It appears that Strauss believed in a stable, but tiered, natural order which consisted of wise philosophers at the top of society who could advise patriotic aristocrats who would be in positions of power with a base formed by most other people living a socially conservative domestic life and working in economically productive occupations. This natural order that Strauss believed he had discovered is a new and Heideggerian inspired radical reading of Platonic texts. Unlike Heidegger though, he believed that philosophical thought was dangerous to political stability and needed to be reserved for a wise few who would use this wisdom judiciously. Though Strauss’s ideas seem out of touch with modern life, he was attempting to uphold what he thought was the best possible life for people and the best possible political regime by defending a version of the idea that there is a meaning and purpose in nature.

Like Strauss’s conservatism, Hans Georg Gadamer posits the idea of *tradition*, his apparent substitution for Heidegger’s ideas of *world* or *being*. This tradition must be protected from the attack on it by an abstract theoretical reason that looks to impose a method and structure upon the world. There cannot be a method to reality, for reality is made up of History and Tradition/Prejudice.³¹ Therefore, a practical reason and a hermeneutical approach to reality are needed rather than a theoretical/epistemological approach.³² If freed from the dangers of abstract philosophy, tradition will move forward on its own and protect a good and stable order.

Smith labels the thought of Herbert Marcuse “An Enlightenment/Heideggerian Synthesis.”³³ For as stated in Richard Wolin’s writings, Marcuse never abandoned the Western tradition. His *critical theory* attempted to posit a free political realm based on modern Enlightenment ideas coupled with “Heidegger’s understanding of Enframing and the totalitarian nature of modern technology.”³⁴ Both Hannah Arendt and Marcuse are alike in this regard in that they both embraced some of the metaphysical postulates on freedom and autonomy of Immanuel Kant. Smith states that in Marcuse there is a Kantian subtext that “true freedom is to be found outside instinctive nature in the arena of acts freely chosen by an autonomous self.”³⁵ Just like Arendt’s idea of the public realm, Marcuse’s debt to Kantian notions of the autonomy of the free self is his way of preserving the human person from the threat of the abuse of power.³⁶

Hannah Arendt’s idea of the *public* was her application of Heidegger’s idea of world to the political sphere. Smith though is correct to point out that Arendt’s conceptions are metaphysical. The “formalism” of her concept of action asserts that authentic political action is not about economics or war.³⁷ Rather “pure action” is speech and is “about the *self-revelation of the speaker*.”³⁸ This comes from Heidegger’s idea of truth as a revealing rather than truth being a set of verifiable statements. Just like Wolin’s reading though, Smith underplays the democratic and

Kantian elements in Arendt's thought that places her political ideals closer to Jeffersonian style participatory democracy than the elitist Athenian model which she sometimes uses to explain the root of the meaning of politics in the Western tradition.³⁹

Tracing Heidegger's influence upon his students, it is evident that they saw that there is a need for a return to the metaphysical elements of the philosophical tradition that Heidegger wished to destroy. Whether one finds agreeable the leftist thought of Derrida and Rorty, the conservative thought of Strauss and Gadamer, or the Enlightenment thought of Marcuse and Arendt, all of them were unwilling to abandon the Western heritage as Heidegger did in both word and deed.

A Shared Project: Commitment to Political Responsibility

What also ties together many of Heidegger's followers is their commitment to a political responsibility in the world that he obviously did not share. In the introduction to a collection of essays about Heidegger's Jewish followers, Samuel Fleischacker writes that Arendt, Strauss, Jonas, and Emmanuel Levinas left Heidegger's philosophy for responsible thought.⁴⁰ That is the best way to phrase it, because each of them in their own way was taking Heidegger's ideas onto better terrain in order to make up for the sins of their master.

In regard to Strauss, Catherine Zuckert concurs. Zuckert claims that Strauss blamed modern philosophy for the nihilism of the modern world. The sickly modern world needed a dose of certain Platonic elements of the classical and medieval philosophical tradition. This was no mere intellectual exercise. Instead Strauss thought that a rehabilitation of the Platonic understanding of nature and philosophy could counter the ill effects of modern philosophy and reestablish nature as a standard to judge regimes and provide the Western world with the political strength it needed against totalitarian forces.⁴¹ Daniel Doneson writes that Strauss is in dialogue with Heidegger when he calls for philosophical reflection to begin with "the moral-political sphere of human life" so that reason and revelation can be present for the philosopher and the citizen.⁴² In this way the political community can avoid the twin dangers of an irrational religion not tempered by its dual existence with philosophic wisdom, or a modern rationalism that would strip the political community of its belief in the divine source of its laws.⁴³

Lawrence Vogel recognizes that Strauss believed democracy needed absolutes to defend its honor and establish justice at home.⁴⁴ Strauss believed that Heidegger was a political nihilist and an historical relativist who ignores natural right, whereas Hans Jonas held that Heidegger was a cosmological nihilist and philosophical dualist who separated the human from the natural.⁴⁵ For Jonas, there is a need to again be integrated with the natural world and realize that our obligation to nature, the environment, and life is "an objective assignment in Being."⁴⁶ Jonas also embraced a common Jewish-Christian heritage of the West to counter what he saw was the paganism of Heidegger.⁴⁷

Emmanuel Levinas focused less on nature and more on people's relationship with their fellow human beings. For Levinas, ethics is most important, that is "ethics as first philosophy"

and not philosophy as the mastery of ontology where we ignore the “Other” and its “infinite pre-predicative moral claim on us.”⁴⁸ The “Other” represents “infinity” or “transcendence” where theoretical reason represents a “totality.”⁴⁹ Levinas used Heidegger’s thought to acknowledge the claim that other beings have on us. Levinas also used metaphysical language in order to deal with political responsibility. In this regard to this priority of ethics in Levinas, Leora Batnitzky wrote:

[I]n an attempt to reinstate a metaphysical perspective, Levinas maintains that, contra Heidegger, identity is not wholly fluid but concrete and that ethics consists in the concrete particularity of the individual. Levinas’s philosophical and confessional writings come together as he holds Heidegger responsible for his deeds because he is an individual capable of conscious (might we say Cartesian?) choice, just as Levinas’s own individuality leaves him free to judge Heidegger. The self that chooses, acts, and judges is a separate, individual self.⁵⁰

When one looks at Heidegger’s Jewish followers, again it appears that Hannah Arendt is able to best integrate all the elements present in their thoughts: Strauss’s concern with the strength of the public realm against totalitarianism, Jonas’s concern with nature, and Levinas’s emphasis on the “Other.” All the while, Arendt never takes the focus away from the requirements of a good political order. As did Levinas, Arendt wanted to preserve a space for action which meant a space for plurality.⁵¹ Engagement with others could only be as free and equal citizens in a public political space. Jonas wanted to emphasize our essence as beings in the natural world, and though Arendt focused on the realm of human choice, she explained that human beings also live as laborers and workers who live within the rhythms of the natural world (think of one’s body and its needs) and are, at the same time, able to take create elements out of the natural world and work them into reified things which stand independent of nature (think the creation of monuments, statues, and living spaces).⁵² What is most human though, is the political nature of the person and that is what must be preserved against the totalitarian threat. Rather than myth making, what is really needed to guard the political realm is the realization of the essence of politics.

Arendt applied Heidegger’s existential deconstruction of the Western tradition to benefit rather than undermine “human freedom.”⁵³ Where Heidegger’s concept of the *polis* is a work of art that is a violent creation, Arendt’s concept is deliberative.⁵⁴ The idea that one must share the world with others is a complete rebuke to Heidegger’s tendency towards philosophical solipsism and totalitarian collaboration.

Conclusion

Though the tendency of a paper on political theory is to discuss ideas and concepts at a very abstract level, the issues related to Martin Heidegger’s influence are very concrete and get to the heart of the human experience in the twentieth century. Heidegger offered no apology or explanation for his endorsement of the Hitler’s regime. There is no excuse for that. Yet, this highly flawed human being was also a great teacher and brilliant scholar who had an enormous impact upon later generations of scholars. This paper examined the issues surrounding

Heidegger's followers who used his thought to develop philosophies and theories that were much more politically responsible than his own and that specifically sought to avoid the totalitarianism that he embraced.

This paper examined some of the major secondary sources that have focused on some of Heidegger's former students. We have done that to explain how it is that a certain group of followers were able to be influenced by Heidegger's genius, yet liberated from the perniciousness of his political judgments. Heidegger's failure remains so fascinating and troubling because it was so spectacular. He tried to leave behind the entire intellectual apparatus of the Western tradition and to walk like a blindfolded tightrope walker across the abyss that was twentieth century Europe. His fall from grace was inevitable, for he tried to do it all on his own, and he left behind too many intellectual resources. He tried to reconstruct the entire philosophical heritage of the Western world with only his ego and philosophical acumen to sustain him. His followers, in one way or another, abandoned his dangerous radicalism that only ended up in a servile position in the face of a vile and genocidal state power. His followers attempted to take his philosophy and have it serve the cause of human freedom. For that effort, they had to return to the Western tradition and embrace some of the conceptions that Heidegger wished to wipe away forever. In that journey, they may not be as bold as Heidegger and they may be less important in the history of philosophy than Heidegger, yet their goals validate their efforts to move beyond Heidegger towards the always fragile possibility of freedom.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 8, emphasis in original.

² Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 18-19.

³ See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

⁴ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 12-13.

⁵ I borrow the idea of leaving Heidegger for responsible thought from Samuel Fleischacker, "Introduction: Heidegger's Affinities with Judaism," in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers, Essays on Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Hans Jonas, and Emmanuel Levinas*, edited by Samuel Fleischacker (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2008), 18.

⁶ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 98. Wolin writes that this is like the later Heidegger's "quietest adaptation to the mysterious dispensations of Being," 99.

⁷ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 113.

⁸ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 132.

⁹ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 166, emphasis in original.

¹⁰ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 165.

¹¹ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 166-167.

¹² Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 66-69.

¹³ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* Modernity and Political Thought, Volume 10, Series Editor: Morton Schoolman (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1996), 107, quoted in Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 249, note 87.

¹⁴ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 235.

¹⁵ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 78.

¹⁶ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 221.

¹⁷ Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 225.

¹⁸ In criticizing Heidegger's followers, Wolin writes:

If there is an obvious "deficit" characteristic of existential thought, this has to do with its lack of commitment to the values of "public reason" — an ethos that is the mainstay of a democratic political culture. As Kant once characterized the value of public reason: "The touchstone whereby we decide whether our holding a thing to be true is conviction or mere persuasion is external, namely the possibility of communicating it and of finding it to be *valid for all human reason*." The lack of confidence in public reason on the part of Heidegger and his philosophical heirs is surely in part a generational phenomenon overdetermined by the disorientation of the interwar years. To be sure, if ever there was an epoch in which claims to reason and reasonableness seemed more honored in the breach, this was surely one. Yet, for those of us who seek to ascertain the contemporary relevance of the "existential paradigm," this deficiency cannot be passed over in silence. Instead, it must form an essential part of the equation," Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 236, emphasis in original.

In a footnote to the above, Wolin acknowledges the Kantian influence on Arendt but does not follow through on how this changes his interpretation of her or how Arendt's appropriation of Kant was a crucial part of how she refused, unlike Heidegger, to leave modern Kantian distinctions behind, Wolin, *Heidegger's Children*, 269, note 7.

¹⁹ Gregory Bruce Smith, *Martin Heidegger: Paths Taken, Paths Opened* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007).

²⁰ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 113.

²¹ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 113.

²² Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 229.

²³ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 244.

²⁴ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 230.

²⁵ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 66.

²⁶ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 257 and 256.

²⁷ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 257.

²⁸ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 244.

²⁹ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 243.

³⁰ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 243.

³¹ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 247.

³² Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 248.

³³ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 252.

³⁴ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 252.

³⁵ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 253.

³⁶ For Arendt's public realm as metaphysical see Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 230.

³⁷ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 225.

³⁸ Smith, *Martin Heidegger*, 227, emphasis in original.

³⁹ See Arendt, *Human Condition*.

⁴⁰ Fleischacker, "Introduction" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 18.

⁴¹ Catherine Zuckert, "Leo Strauss: Jewish, Yes, but Heideggerian?" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 104.

⁴² Daniel Doneson, "Beginning at the Beginning: On the Starting Point of Reflection" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 122.

⁴³ However, it is apparent that both Zuckert and Doneson miss how Strauss is not successful in maintaining his desired precious balance between reason and revelation. Strauss reinvented a Plato who believed that politics is based on opinion rather than justice, and these opinions had to be protected from rationalism by limiting philosophy and investing politics with a divine foundation. However, this lack of theoretical reason in politics makes politics like a religious war, dogmatic and based on power alone. My conclusions are exactly the opposite of Zuckert's, see Zuckert, "Leo Strauss" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 89.

⁴⁴ Lawrence Vogel, "Overcoming Heidegger's Nihilism: Leo Strauss versus Hans Jonas" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 142-143 and 148.

⁴⁵ Vogel, "Overcoming Heidegger's Nihilism" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 149.

⁴⁶ Vogel, "Overcoming Heidegger's Nihilism" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 149.

⁴⁷ Vogel, "Overcoming Heidegger's Nihilism" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 157.

⁴⁸ Richard Wolin, "Levinas and Heidegger: The Anxiety of Influence" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 230.

⁴⁹ Wolin, "Levinas and Heidegger" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 230.

⁵⁰ Leora Batnitzky, "Enjoyment and Boredom: What Levinas Took from Heidegger" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 218.

⁵¹ Norma Claire Moruzzi, "From Parvenu to Pariah: Hannah Arendt's *Rahel Varnhagen*" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 41-42.

⁵² See Arendt, *Human Condition*.

⁵³ Dana Villa, "Arendt and Heidegger, Again" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 68.

⁵⁴ Villa, "Arendt and Heidegger" in *Heidegger's Jewish Followers*, 72-74.

SECTION 8
REMEMBERING
THE ROLE OF BUSINESS

ACCOUNTANTS AND WHAT THEY MAY WISH TO FORGET (BUT DO SO AT THEIR PROFESSION'S PERIL)

■
BY ELLEN LIPPMAN AND PAULA WILSON

Introduction

Some may study what we choose to remember, but perhaps we should study what we wish to forget, for many professionals — engineers (Kipnis, 1981), doctors (Glass, 1997; Aly et al, 1994), and accountants (Lippman and Wilson, 2007), among others — may wish to forget their profession's complicity in the perpetration of the Holocaust.

As a group, accountants are not the scary sort. After all, what decisions do they make? They provide the information; other managers make the decisions. Yet, accountants can be a critical component in the efficient allocation of resources and in the quality of decisions made. Information is power, and whoever controls the accumulation and dissemination of information ultimately controls decisions. By choosing what information to report and how to present it, accountants can deeply affect what decisions are made. Thus, ultimately accountants hold much power, a power they have been reluctant to claim. This certainly was true during the Holocaust.

Complicity of German Businesses and Accountants during the Holocaust

During World War II, Jews in Germany and other countries conquered by Germany were rounded up as Germany expanded its grip on Europe. Jewish residents were transported to concentration camps and extermination camps in Poland, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere. The German army, specifically the SS, developed a slave labor operation that used camp prisoners in their own operations and, as well, leased concentration camp prisoners to work at for profit corporations. The leasing served several purposes. First, it allowed the SS to exploit prison labor and generate revenue. Additionally, the slave operations became an integral part of the “final solution,” the plan to eradicate Jews permanently from the world. Since the conditions in the camps where the prisoners lived and the conditions under which the prisoners worked were horrendous, the prisoners were, as a matter of fact, worked to death in the factories. While the final solution did not succeed, it is estimated that six million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. This number represents over 1/3 of the entire Jewish population in the world, then estimated at 20 million, and over 63% of the population of the European Jewry, an estimated 9.5 million at the beginning of the Third Reich.

Many German firms participated in the use of prison laborers. These firms included the giants of German commerce, such as I.G. Farbenindustries (IG Farben), Krupp, Oberschlesische Hyderwerkes, Siemens-Schuchert, Union Metallendustries, and Volkswagen. Some firms used the labor in their own factories, and some created factories on the grounds of the con-

centration camps. Krupp, for example, began using slave labor in its own factories in 1942; the next year it expanded its operations to a factory within the prison camp Auschwitz. Similarly, other firms elected to increase the usage of slave laborers over time. The historian Mark Spoerer examined thirty-three known case histories of corporations that employed concentration camp labor and found only one firm was forced to use slave laborers (Allen, 2002). The firm forced to use slave labor was Akkumulatorenfabrik AG Stöken, a battery factory for U-boats. Thus, thirty-two of these firms used slave laborers willingly. The usage of the prisoners was determined solely as an economic decision, not a moral one. The cheap labor of the prisoners provided an immediate financial benefit to these firms.

Corporate accountants used normal business analysis to monitor and report on the use of slave and regular, hired free laborers. Accountants at IG Farben, the firm that produced the gas to murder camp prisoners, prepared reports for its board members detailing the company's labor usage, and in those reports the cost of slave labor was differentiated from the cost of regular labor (Borkin, 1978). Reports from other companies highlighted the reduced output from slave workers, who were about one third as productive as free laborers because of the treatment and condition of the workers (Allen, 2002). Accountants at Textile and Leather Utilization GmbH (TexLed), a textile and garment company founded by the SS, and The Gustloff Works, once a corporation owned by Jews until taken over in 1935, similarly tracked employment statistics and labor costs, even providing detail for each prisoner's output (Hackett, 1995). TexLed, for example, set goals for piece rate production for the slave laborers. Those women who failed to meet their production goals were subject to beatings, and several women died as a result of these beatings (Allen, 2002).

An example of a report used to monitor results is included in Exhibits I and II. Exhibit I presents the financial statement, in German, from Germany's Buchenwald concentration camp which was in operation from 1937 until 1945. The statement was prepared by accountants under the auspices of SS Lieutenant General Pohl who was responsible for slave labor. Exhibit II presents an English translation of the statement. The projections estimated revenue from the leasing of prisoners to for profit companies, as well as the anticipated revenue from the selling of the prisoners' body parts upon the prisoners' death, estimated as nine months from the time of their arrival at the camp (Kogon, 1946). Death through labor was a calculated technique that coexisted with death in the gas chambers, and sophisticated accounting techniques helped capture information about these options. Thus, the financial statement describes the operations of the camps and the working to death of the concentration camp victims. And, it does so without concern about those who died working.

Exhibit I

Original Document (Kogon, 1946, pp.296-297)

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Täglicher Verleihlohn zwischen RM 6.— und RM 8.—, durchschnittlich	RM 6.—
abzüglich 1. Ernährung	RM —.60
2. Bekleidungsamortisation	RM —.10 — 70
	RM 5.30
Demnach bei durchschnittlich dreivierteljähriger Lebensdauer	mal 270 = RM 1431.—
Dieser Gewinn erhöhte sich durch rationelle Verwertung der Häftlingsleiche nach 9 Monaten um den Erlös aus	
1. dem	Zahngold.
2. den	Privatklei- dern,
die teils der Häftlingsbekleidung in anderen Lagern zugeführt wurden, wodurch sich Neuanschaffungskosten erübrigten, teils der Spinnstoffverwertung für SS- Uniformen,	
3. den hinterlassenen	Wertsachen.
4. dem hinterlassenen	Geld.
Wertsachen und Geld wurden bis in die ersten Kriegsjahre hinein nur bei der reichsdeutschen Min- derheit der Häftlinge den Angehörigen zurückgeschickt.	

Diese Beträge verringerten sich je Leiche um die Ver-
brennungskosten von durchschnittlich RM 2 —.
sodaß sich ein direkter plus indirekter Nettogewinn je
Leiche von mindestens RM 200 —
ergab, der aber in vielen Fällen in die Tausende von
Reichsmark ging.

Der Gesamtgewinn des Häftlingsumsatzes betrug daher
in durchschnittlich 9 Monaten je Kopf wenigstens RM 1630.—.
Durch Knochen- und Aschenverwertung hat sich das eine
oder andere KL noch Spezialeinnahmen verschafft.

Exhibit II**Income Statement****Reproduction from Buchenwald (Kogon, 1950 p.269)**

Revenue	6.00	Reichmarks
Less food	.60	
Less amortization for clothes	.10	
Net revenue	5.30	

Times — expected life span

- in months 9.00

- days worked per month 30.00

Total revenue for period 1,431.00

Plus revenue at death 200.00

Net profit per prisoner 1,631.00

This profit is based on efficient reutilization of prisoner corpses after 9 months from: gold fillings; from [privately-owned] individual articles of clothing which were mostly used as clothing for prisoners in other camps, so that costs related to acquiring new clothing was unnecessary, and as recycled fabric for SS uniforms; items of value, which were left behind; and gold which was left behind. Only items of value and money owned by the minority of the prisoners, who were German citizens, were sent back to their families. These amounts were reduced by cremation costs on average by 2 Marks per corpse, so that there was a direct plus an indirect net profit per corpse of at least 200 Marks, but which in many cases resulted in thousands of Reichmarks.

The total profit of the turnover of prisoners per capita in a nine-month period on average amounted therefore to at least 1,631 Reichmarks. Through the reutilization of bones and ashes, they were able to procure additional special earnings. (Notes translated by Laura McLary, 2010.)

Accountants at other camps also determined the costs of keeping the prisoners alive and weighed these against the benefits from the rental income generated by the prisoners. For example, at Auschwitz, prisoner food cost only nine cents per day per prisoner. The accountants compared the cost of the daily food allowance to the benefit obtained by the productivity of the prisoners as they starved to death (Rubenstein and Roth 1987). The Nazis determined that prisoners should be provided only enough food to keep them alive for three months, because after that time the prisoner productivity level fell below the cost to feed them.

One normal accounting technique abused during the Holocaust was the cost benefit analysis (CBA) typically used when choosing between several alternatives. CBA is normative (Larrick et al. 1993). In an accountant's perfect world, CBA could identify all the costs and benefits of various options and then successfully quantify those costs and benefits. In this way, CBA would enable corporations and others to compare the costs with the benefits, and the difference, either a net benefit or a net cost, would provide guidance to the users in selecting an option. Corporations and institutions have used CBA for a wide range of decisions including equipment purchases, staff additions, new technology considerations, and outsourcing (Dmytrenko, 1997). However, since all costs and all benefits cannot be quantified, cost benefit analysis provides only partial information for selecting an option. There is a need also to analyze items that are not easily quantified, and any decision should be determined only after consideration of other, potentially non-quantifiable data (Zerbe, 1998).

Yet, during the Holocaust, CBA was used to choose between methods of killing children most economically. One option entailed killing the children first with gas and then burning their bodies, while the second option only included costs to burn the children, forgoing the gassing of them by burning them alive (Greenberg, 1975). Both options required an expenditure for burning, but the second option would use less gas, thereby reducing the costs (Fleischner, 1977). Gas cost 975 marks for 195 kilos or 5 marks per kilo. It took approximately 5.5 kilos to gas 1500 persons, for a total cost of 27.5 marks. Translating from marks to dollars, this equates to a total cost of \$11 to gas 1500 persons, less than 1 cent per person gassed. The accountants determined that they could save this cost by burning children without first gassing them. Thus, the accountants computed that each Jew was worth less than one cent, the cost savings from burning alive children previously gassed (Fleischner 1977). In their cost analysis, the Nazis considered costs of killing and did not consider the cost of human suffering associated with the killing method. Once a decision was made to kill the prisoners, consideration of human suffering was overridden by concern for economical deaths. And, the suffering was intense. As the extermination efforts continued and gas supplies decreased, the Nazis reduced the amount of gas used for each killing, increasing the amount of gassing time from three to seven minutes, to from fifteen to twenty minutes (Greenberg 1975). While death by asphyxiation is painful, death by burning is worse, and the screams and moans of the children could be heard throughout the camp. But, their cries appeared not to be heard by the accountants who prepared this analysis. The cost benefit analysis and resulting decision

represent usage of ordinary cost benefit analysis flawed at its very core.

Accountants were involved in the Holocaust in other ways as well. Accountants prepared written reports tracking the victims killed by the Nazis victims and the expropriated assets of the victims (Funnell, 1998). Accountants developed an information system used during the Holocaust that identified the flow of laborers and the supervision of production. As part of this information system, the category “unfit” was used to distinguish between prisoners who were fit to work from those incapacitated and subsequently killed (Allen, 2002).

While corporate accountants were private civilians, initially the accountants at the camp factories were Jewish prisoners (Trials of War Criminals, 1950). As these prisoners died, more military personnel and civilians were used to fill the accountant roles, and, as a group, they willingly participated. A few accountants opposed the Nazis, refusing to work for them (Jones, 1999); yet, little documentation exists that suggests accountants, as a group, formally opposed the operations on which they reported.

Similarly, professional accountancy organizations supported Hitler's policies. The Institut der Wirtschaftsprüfer (IdW), Germany's accounting organization, was a fairly new professional group when Hitler became Germany's leader. In 1934, it adopted the “Führerprinzip” which prescribed the fundamental basis of political authority as inhering in the leader. As this principle was transferred into German society, including private corporations, it carried with it the ideology of the Führer which required, among other things, that candidates to the accounting profession prove their Aryan heritage. Beginning in 1938, the certification requirements for professional accountants, Wirtshcaftsprüfers (WP), included an oath of loyalty to Hitler as the Führer (Markus, 1997). The official magazine of the IdW included articles highlighting the restrictions against helping Jewish businesses and Jews in business. Some international accountants apparently supported these policies as well. In 1938, Germany hosted an international accounting conference, and over 300 foreigners, from 33 countries — including the United States — attended (Walker, 2000). Great Britain had the largest foreign presence at the conference with representation from among the largest accounting firms. The foreign accountants attending the conference knew (or should have known) about the restrictions against Germany's Jewish citizens and the Jewish accountants. Their attendance at the conference, in an historical period marked by a climate of appeasement, implied complicity with the policies of Germany.

Responsibility of Accountants

The information that accountants compiled during the Holocaust told a story of efficiency and a story of cruelty. What responsibility, then, do accountants have for what occurred? As Funnell (1998) argued in his Holocaust research and as Fleischman and Tyson (2004) stated in their research on slavery, accounting can reduce individuals to numbers to “render the human side invisible” (Fleischman and Tyson, 2004, p.383), masking the suffering of the victims who were worked to death. Are the accountants culpable because they compiled the information that reported the horrors of what occurred? Are the accountants culpable for what

occurred because of their inaction when they knew of the abuse? Or, are the accountants merely conduits of information, not responsible for the information they provided? Surely, the accountants noted what the information reported. Why then, as a group, did they do little? Indeed, accountants have been called “desk killers” for silently allowing death through their own inaction (Rosenberg and Marcus, 1988).

At the International Tribunal Trials in Nuremberg after the war, persons were tried for crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity — including deporting civilians and using them for slave labor — and conspiracy to commit these crimes. The Tribunal found some accountants responsible for their personal inaction but did not hold all the accountants responsible. Only those with the ability to effect change or change jobs were found guilty of crimes against humanity. Even higher level accountants were not held responsible if their knowledge was remote or the association with the information sporadic (Trials of War Criminals, 1950). But, the Tribunal recognized that accountants as a group were not innocent because their knowledge implied some responsibility.

The preparation of accounting information for immoral decisions, and, as well, the lack of action by those preparing the information, is not confined to the historical period of the Holocaust. Several recent examples suggest a continued lack of moral action, although the consequences have been less severe. The cost benefit analyses performed by Ford Motor Co. in determining whether to redesign the fuel tank on the Ford Pinto is a classic example (and one better known than the Holocaust example provided here) of an improper cost analysis (Mokhiber, 1988). Ford made a similar mistake with a cost analysis on its Lincoln Continental vehicles when it rejected a 3-cent cost per vehicle transmission redesign as too expensive. The car was redesigned eight years later after Ford had spent millions on transmission lawsuits (Hills, 1987). The cost analysis by General Motors in regard to post-collision fuel-tank fires in its “A-cars” provided sufficient evidence for plaintiffs to win millions in settlements against General Motors (Geyelin, 1999). Hooker Chemical Company considered reintroducing the pesticide DBCP (Dibromochloropropane) and prepared expected cost analyses for payments to those rendered sterile by exposure to the pesticide (Hills, 1987).

Accounting is fundamentally a moral practice, not solely a technical determination of reporting standards (Funnell, 1998). Accountants hold insider knowledge and they can, and ought, to use this knowledge to become moral gatekeepers when others are detoured from an ethical standard. When reports adequately reflect what occurred, without sanitizing the nature of the events, then accounting can serve as a catalyst to stop immoral action. Additionally, when accountants are held liable for the illegal or immoral information they report, an elevation of responsibility could be the leaven to increase the moral behavior of society as a whole. Accountants can exercise the power to affect decisions. It is hoped that accountants will choose not to forget the occasions when failure to exercise that power had dramatic and deadly consequences.

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SECTION 9
REMEMBERING
HISTORY TO DIRECT THE PRESENT

AN ACHIEVABLE TWO STATE SOLUTION



BY FRANK AFRANJI, REV. DR. RODNEY PAGE, RABBI JOSHUA STAMPFER

Decades of bloodshed, violent conflict, and negative indoctrination in schools and in the media have left Palestinians and Israelis bitterly distrustful of each other. Add on top of this separate religious beliefs and distinct cultures, and we have the current reality that has left Palestinian Christians and Muslim Arabs and Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christian Arabs completely isolated from each other. Not only do they attend different schools and live in separate neighborhoods, towns and cities but, more significantly, they also have managed to erect a huge mental wall separating the populations from each other. To these social and mental barriers a physical wall — a steel and concrete barrier — has now been added.

The lives of the people who live in the land called holy are inextricably intertwined by the bitter experience of their shared tormented history but also by their love for the same piece of holy real estate that heavens has destined them to share. Should not this shared history and mutual love of the land put them on the path of building one state where Christians, Muslims and Jews should share — a democratic state based on the principle of a one person one vote form of government? The logical mind would certainly come to that conclusion. But then logic, common sense, and a rational mind require a healthy mind and body to arrive at such rational conclusion. Unfortunately, the mutual experience of these populations forced them into a situation where they “cannot see the forest for the trees.” Israelis and Palestinians have spent the past seven decades joined in a failed, bitter, quarrelsome marriage that now requires a long period of separation and a deliberate series of incremental steps to allow the mind and heart of these populations to move forward and to heal. Thus, the need arises for two separate states with distinct political boundaries but without economic boundaries because of the mutual economic dependency of the people on each other.

As a matter of fact the majority of Israelis and Palestinians and as well, the international community, despite the extremists who, although they number just a few among Christians, Muslims and Jews, have been, unfortunately, very effective at sowing discord and distrust among the peace loving population, seem to have reached agreement regarding the general parameters required for resolving the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Over the last two decades these same basic principles for an agreement were presented in a variety of proposals. We had the Clinton, Taba, Camp David, Geneva, Annapolis, the Arab League plans and countless other initiatives by Israeli and Palestinian intellectuals. All these plans had the following common ingredients: (1) withdrawal from the lands occupied by Israel in 1967 based on the principles embodied in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338; (2) the right of Israel to live in secure and defined borders; (3) the right of the Palestinians for self-determination and establishment of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and

the Gaza Strip; (4) the sharing of Jerusalem as a capital of both states; (5) an end to the state of belligerence between Israel and the Arab States; (6) reaching a fair settlement regarding the Arab and Jewish refugees; and (7) declaration of a clear and unambiguous end to the conflict by all sides.

Each of these plans had somewhat of a different twist on the basics in regard to what to do with the settlements, which settlements will be incorporated into Israel and what land and in what proportion will be given, in compensation, to the Palestinian state from Israel proper. Some ideas regarding sharing of the holy places in Jerusalem have been rather innovative in an attempt to meet the needs of both populations. For example, former United States President Clinton proposed that the Palestinians have horizontal sovereignty over the area that holds the Haram al Sharif/ Temple Mount, while Israel have vertical sovereignty over the same area, since many believe that the remnants of the second temple are buried in the area adjacent to the Al-Aksa mosque. Unfortunately none of these proposals gained traction and not from the lack of trying, but for many political and psychological reasons. Prime among these reasons is the ability of the minority extremist camps of all sides to influence the political discourse in Israel, the Palestinian territories, the Arab street and last, and most importantly, on Capitol Hill in the United States. The reason an extremist minority is capable of exploiting the peace seeking majority can be traced back to the current situation in Israel and Palestine that has dictated the separation of these populations from each other. The reality is that a Palestinian Christian or Muslim, who holds an Israeli citizenship, in most cases, would be barred from moving into a Jewish neighborhood or be accepted as a member of a Kibbutz. It is also almost impossible for an Israeli Jew to move into Palestinian towns like Ramallah and Bethlehem. History is replete with events that prove the truth of the following saying, over and over again, "Separation leads to ignorance, and ignorance leads to prejudice, prejudice leads to hatred and hatred leads to misunderstanding and violence." The Palestinians and Israelis are not immune to this phenomenon.

Therefore, in order to disarm the extremist camp it is important to engage in a deliberate grass root effort combined with governmental legislation that together seek to improve integration of the two populations. The proposed legislation and the grass root endeavors include the following.

1. Passing enforceable laws in Israel and Palestine against "Redlining." This will allow mixing of neighborhoods by encouraging inter-religious and inter-ethnic integration of Christian and Muslim Arabs with the Jewish population. The current status of segregated villages, towns and cities contributes in a large measure for ignorance of the "other" and in perpetuating racism by both groups.
2. Legislating laws that require integration of sports teams, music festivals and other venues by intermixing of the various ethnic and religious groups.
3. Creation of a national Peace Society at the high school level that awards students and schools that work on advancing peace and creating a diverse society.

4. Creation of a United Nations Committee that has over-sight on the educational material used in Israel and Palestine with the narrow scope of removing material that advances hatred and racism.
5. The creation of effective joint water and tourism commissions for Jordan, Palestine and Israel. An example would be having three separate guides from the three different faiths work with each of the tour groups to ensure minimization of the conveyance of inaccurate information regarding the “others” that seems to occur frequently at the present time. Reflecting a more accurate view of the situation on the ground will lead to better understanding by the international community.
6. Creation of a joint religious commission that would promote dialogue and cooperation between the parties.
7. A major financial “Stimulus Package,” provided by the international community to revive the economies of Israel and Palestine. Projects to be invested in, should focus on advancing the two state solution, including relocation of settlers who moved to the West Bank for economic reasons. And the package would also focus on creation of industrial zones owned separately by Israelis and Palestinians but having a common work force. This will avoid the impression of Israeli owners taking advantage of Palestinian laborers or the reciprocal practice by Palestinian owners.

The aforementioned incremental steps should be implemented in tandem with forceful steps, sponsored collectively by members of the United Nations Security Council, to ensure that the will of the majority of Israelis, Palestinians and the international community is adhered to by the parties. For far too long the peace-seeking majority has been held hostage to the politics of a powerful minority that effectively used the excuse of all the parties' needing to come to agreement through direct and mutual negotiations without outside interference. This has been a recipe for disaster that has resulted in more bloodshed, suicide bombing, separation walls, and more settlement expansion. For the past twenty years these fruitless and meaningless negotiations have only contributed to rendering the two state solution all but impossible. Every day that is spent on those fruitless Byzantine negotiations is a day that further entrenches the occupation, widens the gap between Palestinians and Israelis, and prolongs the suffering of Palestinians and Israelis.

Now that the entire international community — including the United States — seems to have agreed that the continuation of the construction of settlements and their related infrastructures is rendering the option of the two states nearly impossible to be attained, there must be solid and meaningful steps initiated by the United Nations Security Council and supported by those who are seeking peace among Israelis, Palestinians, Arab States and the Jewish Community in the United States, that demand the immediate end to the settlement expansion. It has become very clear at this stage that the advocates of settlement expansion are defeating their own goal of having a Jewish homeland by rendering the two state solution all but impossible to attain and at the same time forcing the creation of a bi-national state.

A bi-national state arrived at through this path will be a recipe for continued strife for many centuries to come. By contrast, creation of separate viable states with full sovereignty (a) allows each nationality to be in the majority within its own political borders and to be free to exercise its norms and traditions while affording the full rights of citizenship to the minority within its borders, (b) ensures positive interactions among the various religious and ethnic groups, and (c) facilitates the hoped for decrease in ignorance and its resultant violence.

The United States holds the key to advancing the peace process. The United States public must be aroused to support the peace camp and to urge its government to support enforceable United Nations Security Council resolutions that calls for the following:

1. A secure Israel within its 1967 boundaries with minor border adjustments that allow for the incorporation of those large settlements that are contiguous with Israel into its proper political sovereignty. An equal amount of land that is comparable in quality will be transferred to Palestine.
2. The creation of the state of Palestine in the West Bank and in Gaza that has sovereignty over its land, air space and sea.
3. West Jerusalem (including the Jewish quarter of the old city) will be the capital of Israel and East Jerusalem the capital of Palestine. The border between the two capitals should be determined by the above general principles; however, the entire city will remain open to both people. A joint "umbrella municipality" must be created with overarching ability over the two separate municipalities.
4. The question of Arab and Jewish refugees will be referred to an arbitration body of international jurists selected by both sides. The jurists will have a predetermined timeline to come to a decision. This decision will be binding on the parties.
5. All members of the Arab League will announce the end of hostilities towards the state of Israel, and will open full and reciprocal economic and political relations.

The simple and agreed definition of stupidity is "trying to do the same thing over and over and hoping for different results." The parties have been left to negotiate on their own with minimal pressure and interference. The same direct type negotiations have been attempted over and over for several decades and the consistent outcome has been "failure followed by blood shed." Is not the time ripe to get on a new path that combines incremental and mutual steps supported by legislation that encourages integration of the two communities with the hope of improving their relations, combined with enforceable United Nations Security Council resolutions that may get the parties on a path to achieve the desired goal of peace, security, and freedom for both Israel and Palestine? It is indeed!

Frank Afranji, the Rev. Dr. Page and Rabbi Joshua Stampfer are the founders of the Oregon Chapter of the Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East. Afranji, a Muslim, works at Portland Gas and Electric. The Rev. Dr. Rodney Page is the retired director of Ecumenical Ministries of Portland. Rabbi Stampfer was Rabbi at Neveh Shalom in Portland

Oregon for forty years. Stampfer was born in Palestine but emigrated to the United States as a child. Stampfer attended the United States conference on peace in the Middle East in 1988 for the Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East and became an early advocate of Israelis' and Palestinians' living side by side in peace. He persuaded Afranji and Page to get involved and they eventually wrote this document which they have presented at many meetings and conferences. All are vocal in the Portland area promoting the advancement of the Middle East peace process. In addition, they have, for many years, hosted trips to the Holy Land and served as guides for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who wish to understand the complex issues there and to understand the longing for peace by the people of the land.

THE HISTORICAL MYTH OF ZIONISM

ITS EFFECTS ON THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND

■
BY J. G. STEUBBEL

No single modern event has stirred more apocalyptic enthusiasm than the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, but it was not wrought, without much pain and suffering to the indigenous Christian and Muslim Arab populations in Palestine. The Zionist¹ movement — protected and assisted by Britain's policy for establishing a Jewish homeland — brought about drastic changes which seemed destined to predict Palestine's future history of displacement and terrorism.² The Palestinian people found themselves displaced from a majority to a minority society, laboring under what has often been a brutal Zionist occupation that has evolved into equally brutal opposition which has taken the form of indiscriminate acts of domestic and international terrorism. A basic understanding of the origins of this conflict is essential if any semblance of comprehension can be reached over why individuals, such as Christian Palestinian George Habash — a respected medical doctor and organizer of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — were willing to commit brazen acts of terrorism and indiscriminate suicide bombings. Additionally, this paper will consider another aspect: How the ongoing expansion of Israeli territory since 1948 through Zionist campaigns of terror and ethnic cleansing, have also created their own paradigm for terrorism, through a form of violence and intimidation that is remarkably similar to Nazi campaigns against the Jews which were used in World War II.³

There are diverse opinions on the legitimacy of Zionist efforts to establish a completely Jewish state in Israel. As one example, Edward W. Said, in his book, *The Politics of Dispossession*, describes Arab Palestinians as having an “unprecedented unilateral wrong done to them by State-Zionism.”⁴ The issue of “persecuted European Jews” fails to justify the Palestinian displacement which has been summarized in the following observation: “History recognizes no cases, except for the extermination of the Tasmanians, in which the virtually complete supplanting of the indigenous population of a country by an alien stock of people has been achieved in as little as two generations.”⁵

While in theory, Zionism postured itself as a commendable movement created to relieve Jewish suffering, in actuality it has meant the disenfranchisement of an indigenous people, resulting in the largest refugee group in the history of the world.⁶ Additionally, Zionism as “put into practice in Palestine generations ago, and as practiced in Israel today, can be defined as colonialism because it defines the indigenous population as foreign and gives the real foreigners privileges not accorded to the natives.”⁷ Nor were Zionist leaders unaware of the heavy concentration of Muslim and Christian Arabs in Palestine. Actually, the presence of existing people on the land was “recognized immediately as both a moral issue and a practical question.”⁸ As this paper will indicate, those who raised moral concerns were “maligned and

scorned” for being faint-hearted to those who sought mass Jewish emigration and the expulsion of the “natives,” as Palestinians were called.⁹

Throughout Jewish history there has been a certain “longing for Zion” which is reflected in the Hebrew prayer book exclamation: “Next year in Jerusalem.” But a pious longing for Jerusalem and its biblical temple should not be confused with the secular movement to establish a national homeland for Jews in Palestine, which was led by Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), an ethnic Jew and Viennese journalist.¹⁰ Herzl was not the first to put together plans for the migration of Jews to Palestine, but he was the one whose keen mind most systematically devised the application and strategy which caused the upheaval of one group of people for the placement of another in a manner which has been compared to displacement practices in Nazi Germany.¹¹

The motivation of Herzl, as with Adolf Hitler, was not dictated by a religious longing for an ancient homeland or by an appeal to biblical injunctions. It was motivated by a perspective which seems to offer a striking parallel to Pan-Germanism with its emphasis on *das Volk*¹² which translates to “the people.” Under Hitler’s vision for *das Volk*, as it was officially known, all persons of German race, blood or descent, wherever they lived, and under whatever political system, owed their primary loyalty to Germany, the *Heimat*.

Under Herzl’s vision for the occupation of Palestine, Jews wherever they lived, and under whatever nation or political system they found themselves, formed a distinct nation, whose destiny and loyalty belonged to a physical Jewish nation state. Herzl’s plan excluded the rights of the indigenous people, although his diary entries indicate that he recognized a “population” already existed in a land he sought to seize for the resettlement of the Jews:

When we occupy the land, we shall bring immediate benefits to the state that receives us. We must expropriate gently the private property on the estates assigned to us. We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries while denying it any employment in our own country. The property owners will come to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.¹³

The potential for religious or political terrorism can occur when the “other” is demonized and thought of, as less than human, such as Herzl’s use of the word “it” instead of “them” in his reference to the Muslim and Arab Christian populations of Palestine. In June 1948, when Israel was officially recognized by the United Nations, Aharon Zisling, Israeli Minister of Agriculture, forecast a future potential for violence when he observed: “Hundreds of thousands of Arabs who will be evicted from Palestine ... will grow up to hate us.”¹⁴ Zisling’s prophecy has proven to be historically accurate.

Herzl, the founder of Zionism, was not regarded as a religious Jew. His motivation was based on nationalism, bordering on what became a personal obsession to create a nation state for Jews, a national homeland. He proceeded as if Palestine were a *terra nullius* at the free disposal of whoever had the power to take it. In August 1897, Herzl convened the First Zionist

Congress at Basle, Switzerland, and brought into existence, the World Zionist Organization and assumed the role of its first president.¹⁵

The seal of approval for Zionism was marked by the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917. It recognized the legitimacy of rights from those whose only rights in the matter “were those of imperial power.”¹⁶ Additionally, the British pledge to Zionism was made while Palestine was still part of the Ottoman Empire. Herzl, however, had an answer for that problem: “Supposing His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in turn undertake to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. We should then form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism.”¹⁷

It must be asked whether the wishes of the majority population were never an issue for serious concern by the international powers that had accustomed themselves throughout their history to “dealing with the problem” of native populations. In this situation, the Balfour Declaration mentioned “the civil and religious rights” of the majority (Palestinians), but not the political rights, in accord with the Zionist mandate for control. A statement allowing political rights to the “existing non-Jewish communities” would have immediately ruled out or negated a Jewish national home in Palestine.¹⁸

The situation of Palestine and its indigenous population reveals what this paper purports is a classic study of Western imperialism, and subsequent domination by a non-native people. The writings and guidelines of Zionist theory and action would appear to be indicative of imperialistic thought and colonial *modus operandi*. It also represents the essence of “old line” British and European racist thought of Arabs as basically, “irrecusably, and congenitally” *the other* who were regarded as anti-democratic, violent, and repressive in their attitudes to the world.¹⁹

As a contrast, Israel continues to be projected as the only democracy in the Middle East which stands against the “barbarism and terrorism” of the Arab populations. Additionally, however, while Israel is regarded by some as an extension or protégé of the United States, it should not be forgotten that the initial “gestation of the Zionist State” took place wholly “within a British imperial womb.”²⁰

The encounter between the Zionist ideal and the reality of Palestine was often harsh. Zionists worked fervently to portray Palestine as “empty” before the arrival of the first wave of Jewish settlers in 1889 in the area known as Jaffa. Their account of discovering the land — presented as a desert — without any reference to its existing people, fit neatly within the myth which Zionists sought to establish from the beginning, as illustrated by the trademark statement, “a land without a people for a people without a land.”²¹ It may be a matter of interest that the latter is one of the most oft-cited phrases throughout both Christian and Zionist literature. It is also the most problematic. Opponents of Zionism often attribute the statement to Israel Zangwill, a British Jew who was an author, playwright, and poet, who ultimately broke from Zionism in an effort to establish his own unsuccessful territorial movement for Jews.²²

Zionists, traditional and contemporary, have sought to distance themselves from any asso-

ciation with the Zangwillian phrase, advising that it was more commonly used by nineteenth-century Christian writers. It is acknowledged, however, that Zangwill was the *first* Zionist to use the reference which can be found within the December 1901 article for the *New Liberal Review* in which he wrote: "Palestine is a country without a people; the Jews are a people without a country."²³ Perhaps Zangwill sought to be symbolic, or exercised some sort of literary license, because he had visited Palestine, and knew that it was certainly not as he wrote "a country without a people." One of the earliest (Christian) published uses of the statement was attributed to Alexander Keith, a Church of Scotland clergyman, in his 1843 book, which has the rather cumbersome title of, *The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob*.

There also appears to be a deeply rooted unwillingness, among Jewish and Christian Zionists, as contemporary Christian supporters of Israel are called, to deal openly with the question of whether a native or indigenous population was actually present in Palestine. If there were no such population, then the fundamental political rights of the Palestinian people are non-existent.²⁴ Diana Muir makes an excellent point in the *Middle East Quarterly*: "Did some Jews actually imagine the Land of Israel as an abandoned land? *Perhaps*." As one example, she references the "discrepancy" shown by the editors of *The Maccabean*, who estimated in 1901 that there were only 150,000 Arabs in Palestine, "perhaps one-third of the true number, and then suggested the following year that one-third of the population was *already* Jewish. They nevertheless characterized Palestine four years *later* as a 'good land, but it is an empty land.'"²⁵

As a side note, it would be less than accurate to term Palestine's indigenous people as entirely unseen. They regularly appeared in quaint nineteenth century photographs and postcards as decorations and icons of ancient times such as shepherds tending their flocks in pastoral tranquility, or water-bearing Arab women, veiled, and softly moving through a desert that did not really exist except in the minds of Westerners who yearned for such scenes of the biblical exotic.²⁶

Western and European religious traditions, throughout the English-speaking populations, have proven to be a strong support for achieving Zionist goals. Such goals would likely have failed, had it not been for centuries of Christian teaching and worship which had "conditioned the Western nations to respond almost instinctively to the words *Zion* and *Israel* and thus to see in the Zionist ideal, not a romantic chimera or an imperialist design to wrest a country from its actual inhabitants" but rather the fulfillment of God's eternal promise and hope.²⁷

Seemingly absent from the aspect of "divine fulfillment" was any regard over the subsequent effect of such massive resettlement on the indigenous population of Palestine, all of whom were viewed as invisible inhabitants, without rights or privileges, to their own land.²⁸ Christian interest in the Jewish resettlement of Palestine began during the nineteenth and twentieth century, largely resulting from the evangelical mode of a literal interpretation of biblical passages. Beginning in the nineteenth century — closely paralleling Zionism — messianic Christians, who called themselves pre-millennialists, initiated efforts which were

intended to bring about or encourage the “national restoration of the Jews in Palestine.”²⁹

The historical pattern of this thought system was illustrated through the very public efforts of Lord Ashley Cooper, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, and William Blackstone, an American evangelist — both of whom are regarded as the most famous “proto-Zionists in the English-speaking world.” Cooper sent a petition to the British foreign minister, urging him to initiate the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. That was followed fifty years later by Blackstone who sent his own petition to the President of the United States. Blackstone, an ardent promoter of the dispensationalist messianic faith, wanted the United States to convene an international conference of world leaders who would officially give Palestine to the Jews.³⁰

Blackstone created a theory historically regarded as the “cornerstone” of what is now called Christian Zionism. He asserted that the United States had a special role and mission in “God’s plan for the restoration of the Jewish people.” Blackstone, regarding himself as the divine messenger, believed God had chosen America for that mission because of “its moral superiority over other nations” and then warned that God would judge America for its level of support to Israel.³¹ That view has not changed. Additionally, the support which Blackstone received — more than four hundred prominent Americans signed his public petition — was an early indicator to Jews as to the level of much-needed encouragement they could expect from the many American Protestants influenced by a strong biblical messianic outlook.³²

The Zionist movement postured itself as political, not religious Judaism. Its nationalist claim was based on the premise that some groups have an inherent or primordial right to live as a nation in a state of their own simply because they share a common ancestry, ethnicity or destiny. One primary motivating force, an oxymoron but which acted in favor of Zionism was the presence of anti-Semitism in Europe which Herzl also used to his full advantage, noting: “No great exertion will be necessary to stimulate the immigration movement. The anti-Semites are already taking care of this for us.”³³ Any implied level of complicity between Nazism and Zionism, as some have evidenced from Herzl’s statement, continues to be a source of historical debate.

In conclusion, Zionism actually has limited commonality with “settler colonialism” although within the “leftist analysis” it is a colonial movement but with distinct differences.³⁴ Its claims rest upon a combination of divine right, unique historical claims, and a compelling need caused by the outbreaks of anti-Semitism. When necessary to appeal to religious circles, Herzl, though not a religious Jew, used every aspect of biblical mandate and the persistent claim of an unbroken Jewish presence in the land of Palestine. He also sought to establish a “unique derivative link” between the biblical paradigm of conquest and Zionist settler colonialism. However, the general public was never made aware of a reality which Herzl knew from the start: That the “Zionist dream would require an Arab nightmare” for its completion.³⁵

The key to establishing a genuine peace for the Middle East will likely rest upon the honest recognition of two points:

(1) Zionism created the Arab-Israeli conflict and its political goals do not represent the reli-

gious prescriptions of either Judaism or Christianity;

(2) acceptance for the emergence of a Semitic “bi-national state”³⁶ of both Palestinians and Jews who are genuinely committed to “cooperative”³⁷ equality and working together *without* the influence of Western powers or other special interest groups.

The aspect of “cooperation” has been dramatically illustrated through the appointment of Ambassador Reba Mansour, a Druze Arab Palestinian, who was named Consul General for the Israeli Consulate of the Southeast in Atlanta, Georgia. During an interview on 17 April 2009 at the University of the South, he personally told me that his great-grandfather had once advised him, when he was a very young boy, that the future for peace in the Middle East would rest upon “cooperation” not war. Ambassador Mansour said he never forgot that advice. His life and work today illustrate that peace between Arab and Jew can happen.

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ENDNOTES

¹The term *Zionism* is often confused by non-Jews as representing a segment of religious Judaism. Instead it represents a political — not a religious movement — which is based on racial ethnicity. The term's first use is credited to Nathan Birnbaum in 1890, as confirmed in Alex Bein, ‘Von der Zionsehnstucht’ found in *Robert Weltsch zum Geburtstag* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Olej Merkas Europa). Also, Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 106.

²One of the most documented examples of Zionist terrorism occurred in the Arab village of Deir Yassin which can be researched further in: Letter to the *New York Times* dated 4 December 1948, “New Palestine Party Visit of Menachem Begin and Aims of Political Movement Discussed” as quoted in Rosemarie M. Esber, *Under the Cover of War: The Zionist Expulsion of the Palestinians* (Alexandria, VA.: Arabic Books & Media, 2009), 186, 194-195. Also, Benny Morris, “Historiography of Deir Yassin” from *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 86.

³Sabri Jiryis, *A History of Zionism: Volume Two, The Jewish National Home in Palestine, 1918-1939* (Nicosia, Cyprus: Al-Abhath Publishing Co. Ltd., 1986), 332.

⁴Edward W. Said, *The Politics of Dispossession* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 333.

⁵Janet Abu-Lughod, “The Demographic Transformation of Palestine,” in Ibrahim Abu-Ludhod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), 139.

⁶Figures from the United Nations Committee on Refugees groups Palestinian refugees as the largest total in the world.

⁷Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel* (London and Concord: Pluto Press, 1992), 72-100, 103-104, 157-159, 216-220.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, “Zionism and Imperialism: The Historical Origins,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Volume 6, no. 3 (Spring, 1977), 103.

¹¹Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press), 112, 113.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³From Herzl's diary entry for 12 June 1895 as confirmed by Raphael Patai, ed., *The Complete Diaries of Theodore Herzl*, Harry Zohn, tr., Volume 1, (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), 87-88.

¹⁴Rosemarie M. Esber, *Under the Cover of War: The Zionist Expulsion of the Palestinians* (Alexandria, VA.: Arabic Books & Media, 2009), 27.

¹⁵Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, 103-104.

¹⁶Beit-Hallahmi, 65.

¹⁷Theodore Hertzl, *The Jewish State* (London: Pordes: 1922), 30.

¹⁸ Beit-Hallahmi, 65.

¹⁹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: First Vintage Books, 1994), 261-262.

²⁰ Paul Johnson, "Behind the Balfour Declaration," from *New York Times Book Review*, 22 January 1984, 31.

²¹ Diana Muir, "A Land without a People for a People without a Land," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2008, 55-62. (Accessed through JSTOR).

²² Adam M. Garfinkle, "On the Origin, Meaning, Use and Abuse of a Phrase," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, no. 4 (October 1991), 539-550. (Assessed through JSTOR).

²³ Israel Zangwill, "The Return to Palestine," *New Liberal Review*, December, 1901, 615. (Accessed through JSTOR).

²⁴ One example comes from Joan Peters, a non-historian who chose to write a revisionist history titled, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984). Her book has been soundly discredited by such academics as Edward Said and Norman Finkelstein as noted in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London, New York, Verso, 1988).

²⁵ Muir, 60.

²⁶ It should be noted that these are only a few examples of many: Sarah Graham-Brown, *Palestinians and Their Society, 1880-1946: A Photographic Essay* (London: New York: Quartet Books, 1980), and *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. Also, Anelies Moore and Steven Machlin, "Postcards of Palestine: Interpreting Images," *Critique of Anthropology* 7, no. 2, 61-77.

²⁷ J. L. Talmon, *The Unique and the Universal* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1965), 72.

²⁸ Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: Ballantine, 1984), 175-207.

²⁹ Yaakov Ariel, "An Unexpected Alliance: Christian Zionism and Its Historical Significance," *Modern Judaism* 26.1 (2006): 74-100.

³⁰ Tuchman, 175-207.

³¹ Tuchman, 180.

³² Yaakov Ariel, "An Unexpected Alliance: Christian Zionism and Its Historical Significance," *Modern Judaism* 26.1 (2006): 74-100.

³³ From Herzl's diary entry for 12 June 1895 as confirmed by Raphael Patai, ed., *The Complete Diaries of Theodore Herzl*, Harry Zohn, tr., Volume 1, (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), 87-88, 152.

³⁴ Charles Glass, "Jews Against Zion: Israeli Jewish Anti-Zionism," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol. 5, no. 1-2 Autumn 1975-Winter 1976, 65.

³⁵ Prior, 184-186.

³⁶ The concept of a single "bi-national state" was first proposed by Dr. Arthur Ruppin, who directed Jewish settlements in Palestine from 1920. His suggestion was ignored and Ruppin ultimately concluded that "it is our destiny to be in a state of continual warfare with the Arabs." Taken from Moshe Dayan, "A Soldier Reflects on Peace Hopes," address to graduating class at Army's Staff and Command College, in Irene L. Gendzier, ed., *A Middle East Reader* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), 407, 417.

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

IMMIGRATION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

■
BY ELIOT DICKINSON

The Roman historian Tacitus described the German tribes in 98 A.D. as a “*propriam et sinceram et tantum sui similem gentem*,” a “distinct, unmixed race, like none but themselves” (1925, 268). This early description is an appropriate starting point for the study of contemporary German immigration policy, for Tacitus captured an inherent feeling about the Germanic tribes that has lingered in the collective psyche of the German people for nearly two millennia. There is still truth in the words of Tacitus, as the Germans are indeed a distinct people, like none but themselves. Yet there is fallacy in the words and in the notion too, for the Germans are not, and they have never really been, an unmixed race. Instead, like most peoples on earth, the Germans mixed with neighbors, invading armies, and immigrants. Hence, the idea of a racially pure German nation is a myth, since the porous borders of the German territories have changed many times over the centuries, and human migrations through central Europe occurred long before and after Tacitus made his seminal observations. Still, many cling to the idea that the Germans are an unmixed race, even after the Nazis committed genocide in the name of the German *Volk* and the “pure Aryan race,” and, moreover, even while German society was transformed through mass immigration in the second half of the twentieth century.

In Germany, the issue of immigration is where the past, present, and future collide. Political asylum, citizenship, and immigration policies are controversial in contemporary Germany because they determine who is allowed into the country, who stays, who legally belongs, and ultimately how the future nation will look. There are different visions of how the German nation should look and be. Some hope for a multicultural future, others fear that *Überfremdung* (over-foreignization) will irreparably alter the nation for the worse. Yet the hopes and fears about the future of the German nation are rooted in yesteryear and must be examined in the context of Germany's intriguing, complex, and troubled history. The Germanic tribes described in Tacitus' *Germania*, the creation of the First German Empire in 800 A.D., the relatively late birth of the Second German Empire in 1871, World War I, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, World War II, the Holocaust, and German unification in 1990 are all important chapters of the story that frame the present-day debates.

Out of Germany's past evolved an extremely exclusive sense of who could be German, which as early as 1913 manifested itself in an exclusive citizenship law based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, or law of the blood. And from the darkest hours of the twentieth century, in which the Nazis committed genocide, the world's most liberal political asylum policy emerged in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Thus, two very different policies coexisted in post-World War II Germany: an exclusive, conservative idea of who could be German, and a liberal asylum policy that welcomed anyone who claimed a legitimate fear of persecution. It is from

the deep recesses of German history that one finds evidence to explain why an extremely exclusive sense of who could be German developed, as well as why post-World War II Germany had the most liberal political asylum law in the world. The historical record sheds light on why Germany has so firmly resisted the idea that it is a “country of immigration,” despite the presence of millions of foreigners.

Contemporary immigration debates must, therefore, be seen in historical context and address the following questions: How did the exclusive nature of belonging to the German *Volks* develop? Why were contradictions in German immigration policy left unresolved until the beginning of the twenty-first century? Why is Friedrich Nietzsche’s question “What is German?” and its corollary “Who is German?” still so important to so many?

Why German History Matters

Without knowing the past, we cannot fully understand the present immigration debates. As Peter Merkl points out, World War II and “national socialism continue to haunt even the generations that have grown up since 1945, an estimated two thirds of the entire population. The past clearly determines a considerable part of today’s sense of identity” (1999, 354). With this point in mind, I employ a “national identity approach” to analyze immigration and its effects on Germany (Meyers 2000, 1251-55). This approach argues that immigration policies are shaped by a country’s unique history and traditions, and focuses on the role of national identity in policymaking. It is an approach that has been used by Mosse (1964), Herbert (1990, 1995), Brubaker (1992), and Kurthen (1995). For example, Ulrich Herbert states:

Although the topic of foreign workers has become one of the most popular preferred subjects for social-scientific analyses since the beginning of the 1970s, researchers for the most part have failed to grasp the phenomenon in its historical dimensions. To conceptualize the situation of foreigners in the Federal Republic solely in terms of a phenomenon of migration processes that are generally typical of capitalist societies and similar in their basic structure is a misconceived and inadequate approach. It tends to minimize the importance of differences — substantial in nature and frequently of considerable consequence for those affected — in the ways foreign workers are dealt with in various individual countries. Moreover, the manner of dealing with resident foreign nationals in the present remains incomprehensible without a critical confrontation with the collective experiences of a society in dealing with the massive employment of workers in the past, and the traditions that have crystallized over decades as a result (1990, 3-4).

Also emphasizing the role of history, Rogers Brubaker writes:

The vehement rejection of every trace of *jus soli* by the government and conservative parties during the shaping of the law of 1913 can be understood only in the dual context of Prussian-German *Polenpolitik* and the nationality struggle in the Prussian east; and the partly real and partly imagined Slavic “*Drang nach Westen*” (drive to the west) that, reversing the historic German “*Drang nach Osten*,” threatened, in nationalist perspective, to flood Germany with millions of Slavs and Jews (1992, 134).

German immigration policies cannot escape the perennial “German Question,” which, as

Knischewski points out, extends beyond the narrow military aspect of how to contain the Germans:

Historically, the 'German Question' was in fact made up of a number of questions. First, how should the outer boundaries of a unified Germany be defined? Second, who was deemed German anyway? And what status should be granted to Germans outside and aliens within the territory of a German state? Finally, what should be the inner constitution, and hence democratic justification, of the German nation-state? (1996, 125).

Further, Herman Kurthen zeroes in on the important relationship between history and the contemporary challenges of immigration:

Current problems with immigration and nationhood date back to the origins of the nation-building. They reflect unresolved contradictions between exclusive ideas of the nation-state and inclusive ideas of republican and universal principles of individual human and civil rights; between rigidly interpreted citizenship regulations and a liberal asylum law; and between the official notion of national homogeneity and increasing diversity created by immigration and refugee movements (1995, 914).

The crux of the matter, then, is this: immigration challenges traditional notions of German national identity, particularly the national self-understanding that Germany is not a country of immigration.

Immigration, Identity, and "Others"

Where does the history of immigration to Germany start? To take a universal view, it starts with the migration of people into central Europe many thousands of years ago — long before there was an identifiable German territory, nation, or state. It is estimated that the Germanic tribes first settled in central Europe 3,000 or 4,000 years ago (Kurthen 1995, 915). However, the earliest significant steps toward setting the geographical boundaries of German territory and constructing an enduring mental image of the Germans came in the first century A.D. In the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in 9 A.D. the Cherusci chief Arminius (Hermann) defeated the Romans, thereby setting the Rhine River as a general boundary, east of which was territory beyond the control of the Roman legions. In 98 A.D. the Roman historian Tacitus wrote *Germania*, the earliest written account of the Germanic tribes living across the Rhine and Danube Rivers beyond the Roman frontier. *Germania* has always been more than just an invaluable historical account of the German tribes, it is the source from which sprang the powerful image of the Germans as a pure race of fierce, loyal, blond warriors. For centuries, this work of Tacitus has been mandatory reading in German schools, and has provided generation after generation of pupils an historical description of the early Germanic tribes.

During the Germanic *Völkerwanderung* (migration of peoples) from A.D. 150 to 500, tribes such as the Goths, Vandals, and Franks migrated into central Europe. Thereafter, early signs of German national identity are evident at the founding of the First German Empire under Charlemagne in 800, and grow clearer in the ensuing centuries. Craig notes that "records dating from the tenth century speak of a *regnum teutonicorum* as an accomplished fact, which

suggests that a recognizable national identity or self-consciousness also existed" (1983, 16). War, trade, and religion influenced not only the spread of German influence in Europe, but also brought Germans into contact with non-German "others." For example, by the fourteenth century the Teutonic Knights had conquered the entire Baltic region from Pomerania to the Gulf of Finland. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries the Hanseatic League attracted a diversity of European traders, merchants, and travelers, who invariably settled in the northern German port cities. Religious refugees settled in Germany following the Protestant Reformation as well. In 1620 the population of Germany was 16 million, yet by the end of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) it had fallen to ten million. The rapid decline in population created a vacuum, which was filled in the second half of the seventeenth century when 40,000 Austrians, 150,000 Bohemians, 43,000 Huguenots from France (after the Edict of Nantes in 1685), and 50,000 Swiss immigrated to Germany (Chapin 1997, 3). The historical record shows that the migration of Germans and non-Germans into and out of central Europe has been constant, resulting in a give-and-take mixture of cultures and peoples.

Immigration to Germany is not a new phenomenon, nor is the exclusion of immigrants, foreigners, and "enemy others" from mainstream German society. For example, in Martin Luther's sixteenth-century Germany, the question "Who is German?" was directed at Jews. Luther, one of the most important figures in German history and Western Civilization because of his profound influence on religion, politics, economics, and (not least) the German language, associated Germanness with Christianity. He saw Jews as non-German outsiders. In a 1543 treatise called "Concerning the Jews and Their Lies" Luther wrote: "What then shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected race of Jews? ... Since they live among us and we know about their lying and blasphemy and cursing, we cannot tolerate them ... In this way we cannot quench the inextinguishable fire of divine rage ... or convert the Jews. We must prayerfully and reverentially practice a merciful severity" (Craig 1983, 128). In an alarming foreshadowing of the Holocaust and genocide that came four centuries later under the Nazis, Luther prescribed a ruthless treatment of the Jews, which, in Luther's words, said the following:

[S]etting fire to their synagogues and schools and covering over what will not burn with earth so that no man will ever see a stone or cinder of them again ... breaking and destroying their houses ... so that they have to live in stalls like gypsies and learn that they are not the lords in our land as they boast and must live in misery and captivity; depriving them of their holy books, silencing their teachers, forbidding them the right to travel or to trade, and seizing their wealth on the grounds that 'everything that they possess they have robbed and stolen from us by their usury' (Craig 1983, 128-129).

Not only was anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism prevalent in sixteenth-century Germany, but the segregation and isolation of Jews from mainstream German society represented a larger trend of exclusion of "others" outside the mainstream culture, ethnicity, or religion. The above passages depict the Jewish minority as not belonging to German society and not being truly German. The phrases "they are not the lords in our land," "we Christians," "they live among us," "we cannot tolerate them," and "they have robbed and stolen from us" are clear

examples of a primordial “us” versus “them” mentality. The overall tone of the above passages is that Christians rightfully belonged to German society, whereas Jews were categorically excluded. The answer to the question, “Who is German?” was, therefore: neither Jews nor any other non-Christians.

Martin Luther’s writings are an early indication of the connection between Christianity and being German. The exclusion of non-Christians from German society became increasingly more pronounced, so that by 1815 the Jewish publicist Saul Ascher wrote in a pamphlet entitled “Germanomania”:

Christianity and Germanness were soon melted into one, an easy task for transcendental idealists and identity philosophers. They reasoned this way. Germany could be saved only by means of oneness and identity of the people in the Idea. Oneness and identity in religion expresses this requirement completely ... It ought not to seem strange that, according to the ideas of these enthusiastic idealists ... the antithesis to their theory lay in the Jews, and this explains the coarse and menacing tone in which, from Fichte at the end of the eighteenth century to his students and admirers today, the Jews and Jewry have been stormed at (Craig 1983, 131).

The exclusion and segregation of Jews from German society illustrate the difficult internal struggle that many Germans have had with their own identity. It was easiest to define what was not German. As a result, and similar to the way the Protestant Britons defined themselves in opposition to the Catholic French in the nineteenth century, the German *Volk* was defined in opposition to others who were not considered to be German, such as the French, Poles, Czechs, and Jews.

The status of Jews, non-Christians, foreigners, and “enemy others” in modern German history is, of course, not unproblematic. For example, while there was certainly anti-Semitism, Jews were emancipated in nineteenth century Germany and played a prominent role in German history. Heinrich Heine, Felix Mendelsohn, and Karl Marx, to name just a few, were Jews who made considerable contributions to German culture (Theen 1997, 97). Many Jews were totally assimilated into German society. As Gabriel Rieser, Second Vice President of the Frankfurt Parliament and a Jew, said, “*Wir sind entweder Deutsche, oder wir sind heimatlos* (We are either German, or we are without a homeland.)” (Vogt 1997, 443). Clearly, then, Jews identified themselves as both German and Jewish. However, in the eyes of German nationalists, Jews and “enemy others” were not part of the *Volk*.

The German *Volk*

The idea of the German *Volk* has been immensely powerful throughout modern German history. It reveals much about the way Germans have thought and continue to think about foreigners, themselves, and Germany. George Mosse has distilled the essence of the German *völkisch* ideology, which later manifested itself in the Pan German League, and Nazi regime, and deserves extended quotation here. Mosse writes, after the Congress of Vienna in 1815,

[T]hose Germans who wanted unity looked increasingly to the formation of a cultural cohesion among their people rather than to a political unity which seemed so dis-

tant. They conceived this cultural unity in terms of national roots and of opposition to the foreigner ... "Volk" is one of those perplexing German terms which connotes far more than its specific meaning. "Volk" is a much more comprehensive term than "people," for to German thinkers ever since the birth of German romanticism in the late eighteenth century "Volk" signified the union of a group of people with a transcendental "essence." This "essence" might be called 'nature' or 'cosmos' or 'mythos,' but in each instance it was fused to man's innermost nature, and represented the source of his creativity, his depth of feeling, his individuality, and his unity with other members of the Volk ... [It] gave men and women their idea of their place in their country and society. It determined their image of themselves and of the world in which they lived (Mosse 1964, 2-6).

The idea that culture, race, ethnicity, language, and Christianity connected the Germans was a significant unifying force. Unity through membership in the exclusive German *Volk* predated political unity under one state, in part because the German territory was so large. Political unity was elusive due to other factors as well. German dualism, the competition for political supremacy between Prussia and Austria, thwarted political unity. France and Britain, which saw Germany as a potential threat, also opposed German unity.

The German lands were so geographically diverse and difficult to unite that the lack of political unity became a feature of German identity. For example, the great dramatist Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) asked during the last years of the First German Empire, *"Deutschland? Aber wo liegt es? Ich weiss das Land nicht zu finden"* (Germany? But where is it? I know not where to find it) (Von Thadden 1983, 51). Schiller's feigned bewilderment came from the fact that Germany was made up of hundreds of independent principalities and lacked clear geographic boundaries. In contrast, the French had achieved political unity in 1789, when, at that time, Germany consisted of over 300 independent states. The French citizen-state (*Staatsbürgernation*) differed from Germany and "stressed the particularist characteristics of an ethnic community of common origin and descent (*Volksnation*) which revealed itself in the national spirit (*Volksgeist*) and its language, culture (*Kulturnation*) or even landscape" (Knischewski 1996, 126). Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, one of the most influential idealist philosophers of the nineteenth century, described Germany in his 1802 draft of *Die Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches* (The German Constitution) as a "shadow state, a state of the imagination, which existed only in its rights, laws and judicial system" (Hughes 1992, 31). Granted, a "state" is an abstract mental construct, but in the German case the state did exist more in the imagination than in actuality.

While the power of the German Empire was weak in comparison to France or Great Britain, the German nation, with its "transcendental essence," took on a life of its own. In 1804 Schiller observed that "The German Empire and the German nation are two different things. The glory of the Germans has never been based upon the power of its princes. Separated from the political sphere, Germans have established their own values. Political defeats could not undermine those values" (Hughes 1992, 31). Thus, the Germans found unity in the *Volk* because political unity was so elusive. It was Napoleon's conquest of Germany that stoked nationalism

and led to the increased demand for unity between the *Volks* and German state. This is exemplified by the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who said in his *Addresses to the German Nation*: “Our present problem ... is simply to preserve the existence and continuity of what is German. All other differences vanish before this higher point of view ... It is essential that the higher love of Fatherland, for the entire people of the German nation, reign supreme” (Fichte 1958, 135). Modern German nationalism can also be traced back to Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, who in 1810 wrote in *Das Deutsche Volkstum*: “The striving for unity is a beautiful votive offering humanity: One God, One Fatherland, One Home, One Love. The demand for unity is the first self-assertion of a new nation” (Jahn 1958, 138). These were early seeds of German nationalism and calls for a German nation-state.

Political unity was difficult in part because Germans were spread across a massive area that stretched from the North and Baltic Seas to the Balkans, and by the end of the nineteenth century there were scattered pockets of Germans living all over Eastern Europe, including some who had migrated as far eastward as the Volga River and Kazakhstan. Moreover, there were Danes and Germans intermixed in the northern provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, Italians and Germans living together in South Tyrol, Czechs and Germans sharing the Sudetenland, Poles and Germans in East Prussia, and French and Germans in Alsace-Lorraine. This demographic and geographic diversity raised the issue of how to legally define non-Germans living within the German territory, and Germans living far outside it.

Throughout history Germany was surrounded on all sides by neighbors with whom the Germans shared territory, were in competition, and intermixed. Maps from the period between the First and Second German Empires (800-1871) reveal that the German borders ebbed and flowed, giving and taking large tracts of central Europe. From Charlemagne to Bismarck, German political institutions included the First Empire (800-1806), the Confederation of the Rhine (1806-13), the German Confederation (1815-66), the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*, 1834 onwards), the North German Confederation (1867-71), and the Second Empire (1871-1918). However, the boundaries of these successive German states never managed to include all the people who considered themselves German, and within these boundaries there were always groups of non-Germans (Breuilly 2001, 2). Moreover, territorial particularism in Germany prevented the emergence of an undisputed capital city. As Goethe said in 1830, Germany had no center, “no city...nay, no country of which we could decidedly say: ‘Here is Germany’” (Sheehan 1989, 3). Whereas Paris and London were the clear capital cities of France and Britain, Berlin, Munich, Bern, and Vienna existed as power centers representing differing manifestations of German culture, dialect, religion, history and geography. Germany’s history of geo-political fragmentation produced competing visions of not only who and what was German, but exactly where Germany was.

The relative diversity of the German people across a sizable territory resulted in contradictory phenomena. At the same time as pan-German nationalists envisioned an ethnic common denominator that bound all Germans together, the question “What is German?” persisted.

Indeed, there were many answers to the question, depending on region, religion, and dialect. Otto von Bismarck noted in a speech before the Prussian Landtag on January 22, 1864, "There must be some special magic in this word 'German.' One can see that each person calls 'German' whatever it suits him and whatever assists his party standpoint. Thus the use of the word changes according to requirements" (Breuilly 1992, 3). Among the German *Volk* there developed a sort of unity amongst diversity. For instance, despite religious differences between the German Protestants along the North Sea and Catholics in the Alps, both still belonged to the German *Volk*. This point is important, for it illustrates that amidst variations in dialect, region, religion, and customs, Germans found common ground in assumed blood ties, race, language, and the *Volk*. These "primordial ties" (Geertz 1994, 32-33; Esman 1994, 10) have persisted through political unity, division, war, and peace.

Political Unity

Political unification came under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1871, but the birth of modern Germany was accompanied by a virulent strain of nationalism based on the promotion of an ethnic German (*Volksdeutsch*) state. As David Calleo points out, the essence of the "German Problem" is that, "whenever unified into one state, Germans become a menace at home and abroad" (1978, 2). With regard to immigration, the birth of the modern German state was characterized by increasing racism, anti-Semitism, and the fear of non-Germans. Anti-Semitism has a long tradition rooted in biblical anti-Judaism, but the intensity of the "us versus them" mentality and the exclusion of non-German others reached new heights. Nationalism was found in every country, but it was exceptionally strong among the Germans. As Mosse puts it, "German Volkish thought showed a depth of feeling and a dynamic that was not equaled elsewhere. The Volkish movement triumphed in Germany because it had penetrated deeply into the national fabric" (1964, 8). The Pan German League believed, for example, that human life was "founded on groups (*Völker*) that were ethnically defined — by language, culture, tradition, and race" (Chickering 1984, 76-77). Inherent in the Pan German League's ideology was not only the fear of being inundated by foreigners, but also an intense desire to secure the German *Volk* against nefarious external influences.

At the end of the nineteenth century, attitudes about immigration reflected concerns that Poles were overrunning Prussia. Nationalists saw the world in terms of a struggle between Germans and Poles, where the very survival of the German *Volk* depended on a fortification against immigrants. This view is expressed in an article in the *Leipziger Tageblatt*, reprinted in *Die Post* on March 11, 1885, which claimed:

A Polonization is taking place in certain regions that had previously been won over to Germanic customs, culture, and language. A wave of Polish immigration is inundating our eastern provinces. That wave grows ever larger, the greater the feeling of discontent among Poles in Russia. In this way, the Polish element is being continually augmented. And it is precisely those Poles emigrating from Russia who bring along with them a high degree of dissatisfaction and longing for the liberation of Poland from Russian bondage. Here they fan flames that otherwise would probably

be extinguished under the ashes. All this forces upon us the question as to whether it is not in fact necessary — in the interest of self-preservation — to close the door tightly on any further expansion of Polish culture and their national-political conception (Herbert 1990, 11).

Polish immigration was seen as a serious and real threat, and remained so throughout the twentieth century. In his address to the Sixth Labor Exchange Congress in Breslau in 1910, Leipzig professor Stieda expressed the following apocalyptic warning against further immigration:

It may sound chauvinistic: “Germany for the Germans.” But it is not meant to be. These words harbor a basic truth, and the failure to recognize that truth will be bitterly avenged should migration continue at the same pace. If we grant permits to foreign workers to the extent desired by the employers, we are heading for serious trouble. Interbreeding with all these alien elements can only spell disaster for the purity of the Germanic tribes. May Providence protect Germany from witnessing the spectacle of her own native sons stunted and wasting away — in favor of foreign nationals! (Herbert 1990, 28).

Professor Stieda succinctly captured the deepest phobias and apprehensions of the German nationalists on the eve of World War I. Since then the arguments against further immigration have hardly changed. The notion of “Germany for the Germans” was a basic tenet of realist and conservative thought in Germany throughout the twentieth century, and is still a principal reason why so many Germans, who fear that non-European and non-Christian foreigners will transform the German nation, oppose further immigration.

In 1913 the question “Who is German?” was legally answered with a citizenship law, called the *Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* (Empire and State Citizenship Law), based on the principle of *jus sanguinis* (law of the blood). This ethnic conception of citizenship effectively excluded membership in the *Volk* for foreigners living within the German territories and included Germans living outside. The new law codified who could be German, coupled membership to the state with membership in the *Volk*, and created a lasting sense of solidarity among ethnic Germans all over Europe. The ethnic definition of citizenship was a result of the nationalist movement in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century.

As Snyder points out, “The combination of nationalism and imperialism led straight to the abyss of World War I” (1978, 91). The German soldiers of World War I were young men sent by old men to fight and die in the name of the German *Volk*, fighting to expand the German territories and defeat the perceived enemies of the German people, such as the French and the Slavs. Like all involved in World War I, the Germans paid a terrible price in human terms. Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* captures the devastation wrought on that war generation, and tells “of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war” (1929, Preface). It illustrates in graphic terms the fanaticism of men at war, willing to do and sacrifice absolutely anything and everything for the *Volk*:

Kemmerich is dead, Haie Westhus is dying, they will have a job with Hans Kramer’s body at the Judgment Day, piecing it together after a direct hit; Martens

has no legs any more, Meyer is dead, Max is dead, Beyer is dead. Hämmerling is dead, there are a hundred and twenty wounded men lying somewhere or other; it is a damnable business... The days, the weeks, the years out here shall come back again, and our dead comrades shall then stand up again and march with us, our heads shall be clear, we shall have a purpose, and so we shall march, our dead comrades beside us, the years at the Front behind us: — against whom, against whom? (Remarque 1929, 139-141).

The Nazis banned Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* because of its realistic description of the horror of war, which Hitler preferred to glorify. Remarque masterfully captured the suffering and psychological trauma that tortured generations of Germans; for those who emerge from the shadow of death, the pain of living can be a torturous punishment unto itself. This was certainly true in Germany after World War I, when old soldiers felt the need, if only in a metaphoric sense, to march again to avenge the perceived wrongs imposed against Germany by the Versailles Treaty. Germany's experience with democracy under the Weimar Republic, however, did not quell the *völkisch* movement, but rather intensified it.

National Socialism

The Nazis took nationalism to the absolute extreme. German fascism “was unique not only in the way it managed to displace the revolutionary impetus, but also in the primacy of the ideology of the Volk, nature, and race” (Mosse 1964, 315). While all European countries experienced nationalism, not all committed genocide. This is what makes German history so unique and why the Germans struggle so mightily with the moral and ethical dimensions of immigration today. While other member states of the European Union readily deport asylum seekers whose cases have been rejected and flatly refuse to allow further immigration, the Germans give pause and ask: How will it look if we summarily deport foreigners? Such sensitivity, which still cohabitates with an underlying “Germany for the Germans” attitude, comes directly from the nightmare of the Holocaust, in particular the Auschwitz concentration camp, that still haunts the German psyche.

The specter of Adolf Hitler still haunts contemporary Germany. He was one of the old soldiers from World War I described by Remarque, on a mission to avenge the perceived wrongs done to the German *Volk* and to settle, once and for all, the question “What is German?” In *Mein Kampf* Hitler wrote:

Thus the highest purpose of the folkish State is the care for the preservation of those racial elements which, supplying culture, create the beauty and dignity of a higher humanity. We, as Aryans, are therefore able to imagine a State only to be the living organism of a nationality which ... safeguards the preservation of that nationality (Hitler 1963, 455).

To the Nazis the state was an extension of the German *Volk*, and the state's primary goal was “to put the race into the center of life in general. It has to care for its preservation and purity” (Hitler 1963, 455). Hitler's racist Nazi ideology brought ruin and misery to Germany and Europe, as World War II resulted in an estimated 60 million deaths, including six million Jews.

As Knischewski points out, “National Socialism took up the fundamental historical problems connected with the German question and provided them with radical solutions” (1996, 128). The “Final Solution” and Nazi reign of terror resulted in one of the darkest chapters in human history.

The presence of a minority of unrepentant Nazis, lingering anti-Semitism, and persistent belief in maintaining the purity of the *Volk*, despite all the horror and trauma that resulted from World War II, presented significant problems for post-World War II Germany. George Mosse’s pessimistic observation in 1964 was that, “Even today, when the still-existing Volkish movement clothes itself in the mantle of a ‘new Europe,’ the ideology is still that of the Volk tied to a mystical concept of nature on the one hand and to the cosmos on the other. Nothing has changed save for a rhetorical reference to European unity” (Mosse 1964, 316). There is an important grain of truth to this observation about the *völkisch* movement in post-World War II Germany. While Germany was democratized and denazified, the *Volk* remained a powerful idea. The “transcendental essence” of the *Volk* did not just die out after military defeat and the imposition of a democratic system, for the tradition ran too deep in the German people for that to happen.

The German “burden” of history is a heavy one to inherit. It is a difficult moment in time when children ask their parents or grandparents exactly what they did during the war. Moreover, it is hard to truly comprehend what happened under the Nazis, for to understand the Holocaust is to understand utter horror, which is no easy or comfortable task. During the post-World War II years many Germans tried to come to an understanding with their difficult past. While the specter of Hitler and the Nazis remained, those who were involved in the war — Germans, Jews, perpetrators, survivors — tried to move on. However, Hitler not only remains with the Germans, but the lessons of the Holocaust are passed from one generation to the next as the ghosts of the past coexist with hope for the future. It is perhaps best expressed by the poet Erich Fried, who wrote in a poem entitled *Spruch*: “*Ich bin der Sieg/mein Vater war der Krieg/der Friede ist mein Lieber Sohn/der gleicht meinem Vater schon* (I am the victory/my father was the war/the peace is my dear son/who resembles my father already)” (1993, 564).

Life goes on, and the weight of history is passed through the generations, which inevitably resemble each other. Fried’s poem is told from the perspective of the first post-World War II generation, which had, as former Chancellor Helmut Kohl said, “*die Gnade der späten Geburt* (the grace of a late birth)” (Merkl 1992, 14). Kohl, who was born in 1930, was born too late to have taken part in the crimes of the Nazis. Nevertheless, his generation had to face the past and try to come to terms with it. The presence of immigrants played an important role in the German attempt at *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (overcoming the past), as ethnic Germans, guestworkers, and asylum seekers immigrated to Germany.

Post-World War II Immigration

A distinction must be made between immigration to Germany before and after World War II. Any comparison must take into account the fact that pre-World War II immigration happened

on a smaller scale, and immigrants came almost exclusively from within Europe. A further distinction must be made between ethnic German and foreign immigrants, which can sometimes be fuzzy. For example, the Austrians and Dutch are classified as “foreign,” although they are sometimes included as members of the German *Volk*. Of the 1.3 million foreigners in Germany in 1910, 50 percent were Austrian citizens, 11 percent Dutch, and 11 percent Russian; of the one million foreigners in Germany in 1925, 27 percent were Polish, 23 percent Czech, and 14 percent Austrian (Münz, Ulrich, and Seifert 1999, 43). Ultimately, the overwhelming majority of foreigners in Germany were from neighboring European states, quite in contrast to post-World War II immigration to Germany.

Pre-World War II immigration was, in fact, a prelude to post-World War II immigration to Germany. In the century prior to World War II, Germany was more characterized by emigration than immigration, as millions of Germans left for the New World, primarily the United States. The German experience in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is best described as a transformation “from emigration to immigration” (Bade 1997). The crucial point is that, in contrast to European countries like Holland, France, and Great Britain, Germany did not have strong and lasting colonial ties that resulted in immigration from the colonies. Further, in contrast to “classic” countries of immigration like the United States, Canada, and Australia, Germany did not explicitly associate immigration with its nation-building process.

The modern era of immigration to Germany began after 1945, when the Soviet Union took control of Eastern Europe, and an unprecedented number of German expellees and other European refugees immigrated to Germany. Ethnic Germans were expelled from East Prussia and Eastern Europe, then East Germans fled the oppressive German Democratic Republic, followed by guestworkers, asylum seekers, and more ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe. In the age of jet travel, globalization, and instant communication, immigration to Germany became possible for more people around the world than ever before.

Immigration to Germany began as soon as World War II ended (see Table 1). The end of the war, officially May 8, 1945, became known as the *Stunde Null* (zero hour). The Nazis were finally defeated; most of Europe lay in ruins; new powers occupied Germany; and the proverbial clock began ticking again — that is, a new life and time began. At the same time, a great tragedy unfolded as Soviet troops rolled westward toward Berlin in the spring of 1945 and proceeded to occupy Eastern Europe. Germans in the east became targets of hostility, as Soviet soldiers and others who had suffered under the Nazis took bloody revenge. Six centuries earlier, Teutonic Knights had pushed the reaches of the German Empire eastward. At the end of World War II Germans were forced out of East Prussia, ending the epoch of German presence there. The city of Königsberg, birthplace of Immanuel Kant, was cleared of Germans. East Prussia, which had played such a vital role in German history, ended up behind the “Iron Curtain.”

Table 1. Phases of Post-World War II Immigration to the FRG

Year	Phase of Immigration
1945-1949	From the end of WWII to the founding of the GDR and FRG, twelve million expellees are forced to leave the German territory east of the Oder-Neisse border, the Sudetenland, and Eastern Europe.
1949-1961	From the founding of the GDR until the Berlin Wall is built, nearly four million East Germans immigrate to the FRG.
1955-1973	The FRG recruits “guestworkers” to fill the acute labor shortage during the Economic Miracle. The “Oil Crisis” in 1973 ends labor recruitment.
1973-1993	The number of political asylum seekers reaches a peak of 438,191 in 1992. In July 1993 the Asylum Procedure Act goes into effect, which amends Article 16, restricts the right to political asylum in Germany, and an annual quota of 225,000 for <i>Aussiedler</i> is put in place.
1989 to present	After the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, <i>Aussiedler</i> and (after 1993) <i>Spätaussiedler</i> return to Germany. Jews are invited to immigrate to Germany. Germany takes in more war refugees from the former Yugoslavia than the rest of the EU combined.
Since 2000	The principle of <i>jus soli</i> is added to citizenship policy. Further reforms are advocated by the SPD-Green governing coalition, and the <i>Zuwanderungsgesetz</i> (Immigration Act) is implemented in 2005.

Source: Münz and Ulrich 1997, 68; Author's Calculations.

In total, an estimated twelve million ethnic Germans were expelled from East Prussia and Eastern Europe immediately after World War II, and approximately two million expellees died from Soviet expulsion and deportation (Bade and Oltmer 1999, 18). The expellees resettled mostly in Austria and Germany, which was divided into East and West Germany in 1949. An estimated 7.9 million expellees settled in West Germany (comprising 16 percent of the population), while 3.6 million settled in East Germany (20 percent of the population) (Münz and Ulrich 1997, 69). Most importantly, expellees who immigrated to Germany after World War II were, as ethnic Germans, automatically entitled to German citizenship. They were culturally and ethnically German, spoke German, and assimilated relatively easily and quickly into German society. They were accepted as Germans, and it was universally agreed that they had

a right to live in Germany. The expellees had their own political party and a significant voice in German politics in the early years of the Federal Republic. They were an important advocacy group for the nearly four million Germans remaining behind the Iron Curtain, living as “expellees in their own country, branded with the sign of being members of the conquered enemy state” (Bade and Oltmer 1999, 20).

Approximately 1.4 million *Aussiedler* (ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe) immigrated to the Federal Republic between 1950 and 1987, and an additional 2.5 million came between 1988 and 1998 — primarily after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe (Münz and Ulrich 1997, 69; Bade and Oltmer 1999, 21). The circumstances under which many ethnic Germans escaped Eastern Europe were not always pristine, as Romania, Poland, and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) sometimes allowed ethnic Germans to emigrate for a fixed price, which the Federal Republic readily paid. The FRG would pay the GDR, for example, “between 40,000 DM for a factory worker and 120,000 DM for a medical practitioner” (Schweitzer 1984, 375).

The most significant similarity between the *Aussiedler* (ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe) and *Vertriebene* (expellees) is that they are ethnic Germans, and thus have an automatic right to German citizenship. However, the *Aussiedler* differ in that they immigrated after 1950, constituting a different phase of immigration, and were not necessarily forcibly removed from their homelands. They came from all over Eastern Europe, but mostly the former Soviet Union (1.6 million between 1988-1998), Poland (600,000), and Romania (220,000). As ethnic Germans returning to their ancestral home, they felt a psychological sense of belonging. Like lost lambs finding their way back to the flock, ethnic Germans returned to the core of what had been the German Empire.

Ethnic Germans who immigrated to the Federal Republic after 1993 are called *Spätaussiedler*. Integration into German society has been challenging for the majority of this group since many, especially the accompanying family members, do not speak German well. One study, for example, found that 56% of *Spätaussiedler* did not pass German language tests in 2002 (Immigranten: Sozialer Sprengstoff 2003). Family members, including spouses and children, often feel little connection to Germany, and are regarded by mainstream German society as only marginally German. Not surprisingly, those who speak German fluently have an easier time of integrating into society than those who do not.

In addition to the *Vertriebene* and *Aussiedler*, *Übersiedler* are another distinct group of ethnic German immigrants. The *Übersiedler* are East Germans who left, escaped, or were expelled from East Germany and resettled in West Germany. The division of Germany into the GDR and the FRG in 1949 produced two radically different states, the former a satellite state of the Soviet Union, and the latter heavily influenced by the United States. The exodus of East Germans to West Germany became an increasingly difficult and embarrassing problem for the GDR. To stem the outflow, East Germany erected the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961, which effectively sealed the border between East and West, but not before an estimated 2.7

million people had fled East Germany, approximately half exiting East Berlin to West Berlin.

The Berlin Wall stopped the free movement of people between the GDR and FRG, and was not only a physical manifestation of the tension between the Soviet Union and the United States, but also a focal point of the Cold War. After the erection of the Berlin Wall, the only East Germans arriving in the West were those who escaped, were expelled for political reasons, or allowed to leave against payment. East Germans went to great lengths to escape the GDR, as some built tunnels underneath the Berlin Wall or were smuggled across the border. Others flew to freedom in makeshift airplanes or swam across the Spree River in Berlin. In total, at least 59 people were shot to death trying to escape East Germany. Political agitators who resisted the socialist authoritarian regime in the GDR, such as the musician Wolf Biermann, were also expelled, since sending dissidents to the West was a relatively simple way for the GDR to eliminate gadflies who questioned the regime.

The migration of *Übersiedler* from East to West Germany presented its own challenges. While *Übersiedler* were ethnic Germans, their experience as immigrants between the two German states was often accompanied by psychological trauma. They had to adjust to the economic system of the capitalist West, where social and political attitudes were markedly different. They were immigrants in their own country and among their ethnic kin, yet they were also called *Ossies* (Easterners), a slightly derogatory term. The Berlin Wall had created a psychological division, a so-called *Mauer im Kopf* (wall in the head), between East and West Germans.

Migration played a vital role in both the erection and dismantling of the Berlin Wall, which was hastily erected in August 1961 in order to stop the flight from East to West. If the emigration of young, educated people had continued, the GDR would inevitably have collapsed much sooner than it did. The Berlin Wall was torn down on November 9, 1989, in part because the GDR could no longer keep its citizens imprisoned within its borders. In the months before the Wall fell, hundreds of thousands of East Germans were leaving the GDR via Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Austria en route to West Germany — a course of events that hastened the demise of the GDR.

It is important to remember that ethnic German immigrants are granted German citizenship under the policy of *jus sanguinis* (law of the blood), and are not classified as foreigners. In contrast, immigrant guestworkers are classified as foreigners. Thus, while ethnic Germans who grew up in Eastern Europe and do not speak German are automatically granted citizenship, non-German foreigners born and raised in Germany were (until the law was reformed in 2000) not eligible for citizenship. This led to a contradictory and unfair situation between groups of immigrants, especially with the growth of a large number of guestworkers.

The famous German work ethic, combined with the Marshall Plan, resulted in an economic boom in the 1950s and 1960s, known as the *Wirtschaftswunder*, or economic miracle. This tremendous economic growth gave Germany a new sense of purpose and identity; there was even talk of a *Deutschmarknationalismus*, or national pride in the currency, the German Mark.

For a time, the immigration of East German *Übersiedler* eased West Germany's labor shortage, but ultimately more workers were needed. As a result, *Gastarbeiter*, or guestworkers, were invited to the Federal Republic beginning in 1955. Germany signed successive agreements with Italy in 1955, Spain and Greece in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Portugal in 1964, Tunisia and Morocco in 1965, and Yugoslavia in 1968 (Meier-Braun 1995, 15). As the name "guestworker" implies, the German government intended for their foreign guests to work in the Federal Republic for an allotted time and then return to their native countries. It was meant to be a rotating cycle, in which guestworkers would come to the Federal Republic when the German economy needed them, and when the need was met or no longer there, were supposed to return home — with both parties having benefited from the agreement. This did not happen as planned. Instead, many guestworkers came, and quite understandably, stayed.

The fundamental problem with Germany's guestworker program is illustrated by Max Frisch's famous quote, "*Ein kleines Herrenvolk sieht sich in Gefahr: man hat Arbeitskräfte gerufen, und es kommen Menschen*" (A small master race feels threatened: workers were invited, and human beings are coming) (Frisch 1976, 374). While Frisch made the keen observation in relation to Switzerland, it has been applied to Germany and widely paraphrased as "*Wir riefen Gastarbeiter und es kamen Menschen*" (We asked only for guestworkers, but got human beings). That is, the German government expected workers to come to the Federal Republic, and instead came human beings with complex feelings, needs and wants. In hindsight, German policymakers grossly underestimated both Germany's long-term dependency on foreign workers, and many guestworkers' willingness to stay.

Myopic German policymaking aside, immigrants often provoke feelings of fear and insecurity among native populations, whether in Germany, Holland, France, or the United States. Problems often arise when immigrants challenge native populations in the fight over scarce resources:

Fear of foreigners, and hostility to foreigners, do not manifest themselves only, or even primarily, as ideological but as social phenomena. The migrants are not just foreigners, but poor foreigners, in search of housing, jobs, social welfare, prospects for themselves and their children. Here they come up against people belonging to the lower third or quarter of society, who defend this standard of living by virtue of nation-based membership in society. This is exactly the point at which the ideologization of the problem, and radical right-wing agitation, begin (Ulrich Herbert quoted in Krell, Nicklas, and Ostermann 1996, 162).

Competition between immigrants and the lower classes of native populations has been a constant reality of immigration, whether in 1871 or 1971. In the 1970s guestworkers established themselves in Germany in large numbers, which gave momentum to right-wing forces in German society.

Guestworkers quickly put down roots as they helped motor the *Wirtschaftswunder* and contributed to rapidly rebuilding Germany into one of the wealthiest countries in the world. They paid taxes, formed their own social groups, and settled their families in Germany. Most guestworkers from Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece — now European Union member states —

eventually did return to their home countries. For example, in 1964 Armando Rodriguez arrived as Germany's one-millionth guestworker, and eventually returned to Portugal where he died in 1981 (Meier-Braun 1995, 15). However, for guestworkers from Turkey (a relatively impoverished country) and Yugoslavia (a communist dictatorship), it was economically and politically advantageous to stay in Germany rather than return home. If they left relatively high-paying jobs in Germany, they were likely to face unemployment and a lack of freedom in their home countries.

Germany ended its guestworker program in 1973 amidst an economic recession and the "Oil Crisis." After the 1973 *Anwerbestopp* (recruitment stop) guestworkers were faced with the fact that, if they left Germany, they would not be able to return. That is, if they returned home, they would not be invited back. Often the trip to West Germany as a guestworker was a one-way ticket into Europe, one of the wealthiest, most stable, peaceful, and free places on the planet. It is no wonder, then, that millions of guestworkers, based on an overall cost-benefit analysis, decided to stay rather than leave for good. It was what most rational people in that situation would do. It was more sensible for guestworkers to stay, and bring their families to live with them in Germany, which is one reason why immigration continued to increase even after the end of labor recruitment in 1973.

The government expected guestworkers to return home, and yet was reluctant to forcibly remove anyone against their wishes, for fear of any association being made with forced deportation of foreigners. The symbolism of such an act would have brought images of Nazi atrocities back to life. Moreover, the government felt an obligation to respect the dignity of the guests living in Germany. As a result, guestworkers stayed and became long-term residents, but not citizens, of the Federal Republic. Again, German policy was indecisive and contradictory. On the one hand, Germany was unwilling to forcibly remove foreigners, and willing to grant permanent residents extensive rights as residents of the Federal Republic — such as access to the benefits of the generous welfare state. They were needed and welcomed, as long as they fulfilled an economic need. On the other hand, guestworkers and other foreign immigrants were excluded from citizenship and membership in the sacred, mystical *Volks*. They were not welcome to stay as full members of society on completely equal terms as ethnic Germans. At one point Germany even offered to pay guestworkers to leave — a strategy that did not work, as few accepted the offer. While the government professed a desire for guestworkers to return home, the German economy did, in fact, need workers who were willing to do dangerous, dirty, undesirable, and low-paying jobs. The undisputed bottom line is that capitalist societies always need cheap labor. That is how an unofficial German immigration policy took shape: Since foreigners were not forced to leave Germany, they stayed, and the longer they stayed the more unlikely it was that they would ever return to their countries of origin. Families grew, children of guestworkers were educated in Germany, roots were put down, attachments were made, and Germany became home to millions of guestworkers.

Germany's restrictive *jus sanguinis* (law of the blood) citizenship policy made it hard for

guestworkers and their children to acquire citizenship. The naturalization process was lengthy and expensive, costing around DM 5,000 (approximately USD 3,500) until the mid-1980s (Münz and Ulrich 1997, 100). Consequently, few guestworkers became German citizens. This created a serious problem, as guestworkers and their families lived and worked in Germany, paid taxes, and contributed to the social fabric of the country, yet they were not citizens and did not enjoy the full rights that accompany citizenship. They could not vote in national elections, resulting in a situation of taxation without representation. Meanwhile, children of guestworkers were born, raised and educated in Germany, and knew no other homeland. Many felt lost between two worlds, feeling neither Turkish nor German, for example, but some mix of the two. The result was the creation of an underclass of people denied not only the legal benefits of citizenship, but also a sense of belonging in society.

Germany insisted that it was not a “country of immigration,” and therefore had neither a comprehensive immigration policy nor the equivalent of a department of immigration in government. Instead, a number of government institutions shared responsibility for creating a wide range of contradictory and ad hoc immigration policies. The interior, labor, and defense ministries all helped shape the rules of entry and residence for foreigners in Germany, which resulted in disjointed policies. However, as Philip Martin points out, “Germany had the unusual experience of pursuing guestworker and open asylum policies that were fundamentally flawed but nevertheless worked the first time they were tested, helping to silence the critics of these policies” (1994, 190). After the 1973 recruitment stop, the only sure avenue of immigration was through Article 16 of the Basic Law, which states “*Politisch Verfolgte genie en Asylrecht*” (politically persecuted persons enjoy the right of asylum). Germany’s political asylum law was written out of a sense of moral obligation to the politically persecuted in the world, and was an attempt to, in part, atone for Nazi war crimes. Thus, Germany’s asylum law became its de facto immigration law. With few other avenues of entry, the number of people claiming political asylum in the Federal Republic increased dramatically throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s.

German Unification

In the autumn of 1989 the German Democratic Republic celebrated its fortieth year of existence in grand style, with a military parade full of pomp and pagentry. It turned out to be the last hurrah for a rotted and doomed regime completely lacking in political legitimacy. The Soviet Union, also in the twilight of its existence, was about to let the GDR implode. On November 8, 1989, frenzied crowds gathered in East Berlin near the Brandenburg Gate on the eve of what would be the greatest event in Europe since the end of World War II. On November 9, 1989, East and West Berliners climbed on top of the Berlin Wall, embraced each other and celebrated German unification with champagne and fireworks. People took turns using sledgehammers to smash the wall that had separated the German people and divided Europe. It was a turning point in world history, and marked the beginning of a new era for Germany and Europe.

The end of World War II in 1945 and German unification in 1990 stand out as important historical turning points, for immigration increased dramatically after each event. At the end of World War II, economic reconstruction, and political division between East and West shaped West Germany's immigration policy. In contrast, unified Germany's policy has been formulated in the context of the end of the bipolarized world, globalization, and implosion of the former Yugoslavia (Green 2001, 84). It was unification that intensified the contradictions and tensions already existing in German policy and society, and brought Germany face to face with not only new problems and challenges, but also millions of new immigrants. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe unleashed a genocidal war in the former Yugoslavia, during which Germany took in more war refugees than the rest of the European Union combined. War refugees were one more group among the massive influx of ethnic German immigrants and asylum seekers entering Germany in the early 1990s. Lastly, Jews have been extended an open invitation to return to Germany. Between 1990 and the end of 2000, 137,054 Jews immigrated to Germany from Eastern Europe in the government's attempt to strengthen and enlarge the Jewish community that was almost completely destroyed under National Socialism (Die Beauftragte 2001, 33).

Between 1954 and 2001, about 31 million ethnic German and foreign immigrants entered Germany, while 22 million left (Independent Commission 2001, 1). These facts show the true extent of immigration to and emigration from Germany in the latter half of the twentieth century. However, the distribution of foreigners in unified Germany is not equal, as the vast majority live in the *Länder* (states) that made up the former West Germany. The lopsided distribution of foreigners in Germany is illustrated by the fact that more foreigners live in the city of Hamburg (which is also its own *Land*) than all five of the eastern *Länder* combined. This is because immigration to East Germany was practically non-existent compared to the West.

The present-day consequence of the unequal distribution between East and West is that xenophobia tends to be higher where people have had less contact with foreigners. This curious fact was pointed out to me by Minister of the Interior Otto Schily (SPD):

So, in short, we are achieving considerable integration. Nevertheless, we also have deficits in integration policy ... and surely there were problems with xenophobia in the past, which has become recognizable everywhere. We have overcome the worst events of this kind. The following observation is interesting: Extremely xenophobic tendencies are strongest represented where the fewest foreigners are. That is to say, in places where it has become self-evident in everyday life that people of foreign descent take part in societal life, there are the fewest problems. Meanwhile, in other regions of Germany, which for historic reasons are not visited much by foreigners, problems now and then come up (Personal Interview, Berlin, July 9, 2003).

To generalize, contact with foreigners has made Germans more, rather than less, tolerant. For example, if your neighbors are Turkish or African, as is often the case in the western *Länder*, you are likely to accept them. In contrast, if you rarely come into contact with foreigners, as is

more often the case in the eastern *Länder*, you rely on stereotypes, which are often negative.

There is a complex, bewildering, and oxymoronic terminology for the millions of immigrants living in the Federal Republic. Similar to the way Eskimos recognize many varieties of snow, Germans recognize many varieties of foreigners. Ethnic Germans are called *Volksdeutsche* (members of the *Volk*), *Vertriebene* (expellees), *Übersiedler* (East German resettlers), *Aussiedler* (ethnic German resettlers), *Spätaussiedler* (late ethnic German resettlers), and *fremde Deutsche* (foreign Germans). Foreign, non-ethnic German immigrants are also called an astounding number of names, including *Gastarbeiter* (guestworkers), *ausländische Mitbürger* (foreign fellow citizens), *einheimische Ausländer* (native foreigners) and *ausländische Inländer* (foreign inlanders). People seeking refuge in Germany are called *Asylbewerber* (now the politically correct term for asylum seekers), *Asylanten* (now a pejorative term for asylum seekers), *Scheinasylanten* (bogus asylum seekers), *Flüchtlinge* (refugees), and *Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge* (economic refugees). These distinctions belong to the realm of political psychology and psycholinguistics, for the differences between immigrant groups loom largest in peoples' minds. To the outside observer, however, it is an example of what Michael Ignatieff (1993, 21) calls the "narcissism of minor difference."

In contemporary Germany there is still a somewhat troubling and somewhat polarizing approach to whom and what is considered German. Katrin Gerdsmeier, who serves as a liaison between the Catholic Church in Berlin and the Bundestag, and perhaps the nicest and most sensitive of all the people I interviewed on this subject, shared this touching sentiment about the psychological difficulty of talking about foreigners:

Well, it's obvious that we are extremely burdened by our history. In terms of interacting with, I'll just say, *Fremden* (aliens), we have — you notice also that now, that I start to stumble. Quite classic. Quite typical. I believe that's how it goes for most people here, we simply have problems even saying the word *Fremder* (alien) or *Ausländer* (foreigner) because right away the alarm bells ring (Katrin Gerdsmeier, Personal Interview, Berlin, July 4, 2003).

Admittedly, history weighs heavily on those whose cultural inheritance includes the Holocaust. One can see, then, that within the most prominent of the multiple German identities — Protestant, Catholic, Prussian, Bavarian, northerner, southerner, *Ossie*, *Wessie*, capitalist, socialist, etc. — questions persist about where foreigners fit in.

Becoming a Country of Immigration

With the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, and the subsequent collapse of East Germany and communism in Eastern Europe, the political landscape of Europe changed dramatically. So, too, did the number of people claiming political asylum in unified Germany. The number of asylum seekers in the Federal Republic of Germany rose dramatically from 103,076 in 1988, the year before the collapse of East Germany, to 438,191 in 1992 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2001, 113). This marked increase in asylum seekers was due to a variety of push and pull factors. With borders open in Eastern Europe people were free to migrate, and in the

absence of a comprehensive immigration policy, claiming political asylum was one of the few legal ways of entering Germany. Further, with its high standard of living and liberal asylum laws, Germany was a desirable destination for migrants — whether they were legitimate asylum seekers, economic migrants, or ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe.

As we have seen, the post-unification influx of asylum seekers was coupled with a rise in the number of other immigrants into Germany, as refugees from the former Yugoslavia, workers from Eastern Europe, and hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans and their accompanying families also entered the country. Such a high rate of immigration resulted in a social and political backlash in the early 1990s, as electoral support for right-wing political parties and violence against foreigners increased. A series of fundamental reforms to German law followed.

In December 1992 Germany amended Article 16 of the Basic Law, and on July 1, 1993, a new political asylum law went into effect. German asylum law became more restrictive, and the asylum process was expedited in an attempt to mitigate spurious claims. Asylum seekers had to prove rather than merely claim fear of persecution in order to gain access to the asylum procedure; applicants from neighboring “third countries” and so-called “safe countries” of origin were automatically denied asylum. Compared to its European Union neighbors, such as the Netherlands, German political asylum law went from very liberal to extremely restrictive.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) formed a ruling coalition with the leftist Green Party after the September 1998 national elections, thereby ending 16 years of conservative government led by Helmut Kohl and the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU). For the first time, the German government publicly “accepted that an irreversible process of immigration into the country had taken place” (Marshall 2000, 150). The first step thereafter was to integrate foreigners by changing Germany’s citizenship and naturalization law. The strict policy of *jus sanguinis*, or citizenship based on ancestry, was supplemented with *jus soli*, citizenship based on place of birth. As a result, children of foreigners born in Germany now have a right to German citizenship if their parents are permanent residents, and foreigners now have a right to naturalization if they have legally resided in Germany for at least eight years and do not have a serious criminal record. With these reforms, the notion of who could be German changed significantly. Ethnically-based citizenship gave way to a more liberal policy that allowed millions of foreigners, many of whom had been born — and whose parents also had been born — in Germany, to have access to the full legal rights that come with citizenship, such as voting in national elections.

The Social Democrat-Green coalition believed that reforming citizenship was but one necessary step towards integrating over seven million foreigners (almost nine percent of the population) living in Germany. Consequently, between 2002 and 2004 a landmark immigration bill, known as the *Zuwanderungsgesetz* (Immigration Act), was heatedly debated in the German parliament. After two years of deliberations and high political drama in which the bill was signed into law and then struck down by the German Federal Constitutional Court, a compro-

mise was reached between the SPD and CDU/CSU. The *Zuwanderungsgesetz* was then signed into law in the summer of 2004 and went into effect in January 2005. This law created a Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, and now admits and grants permanent residence to skilled workers in fields such as engineering and computing, requires foreigners to integrate by taking obligatory language and civics courses, makes it easier for German authorities to expel immigrant extremists and so-called preachers of hate, and recognizes non-state persecution as grounds for political asylum. Most significantly, it is the first comprehensive immigration law Germany has ever had.

In the two decades following unification Germany changed its asylum, citizenship and immigration laws so fundamentally that it is now, in a legal sense, but a shadow of its former self. At the beginning of a new millennium, these changes enable Germany to identify itself unequivocally as an ethnically pluralistic country of immigration — and there is no turning back. “What is German” will continue to be asked, but the answers to this timeless question will also be expressed in new ways that reflect the realities of living in an age of migration and globalization. In the future, the idea of the Germans as a pure, unmixed race will continue to fade away, because it always was, after all, just a myth.

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SECTION 10
REMEMBERING
THE ROLE OF THE ARTS
IN FASHIONING CULTURE

“HE LAUGHS LOUDLY”
HITLER, NAZISM, AND WAGNER’S
DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG

■
BY SAMMY BASU

At its onset, on January 30th in 1933, Hitler’s Chancellorship over the third Reichstag coalition government in the past six months was expected by many across the ideological spectrum to be short-lived. Nevertheless, on February 15th, during the election campaign in Stuttgart, Hitler, emphasizing the comprehensiveness of his mandate, promised: “It shall be our task to burn out these manifestations of degeneracy in literature, theater, schools, and the press — that is, in our entire culture — and to eliminate the poison which has been permeating every facet of our lives for these past fourteen years” (2007:253). The Reichstag building fire, on February 27th, and the violent Communist conspiracy that was alleged to have sponsored it, set that task in motion as a putatively defensive matter. President von Hindenburg obliged by signing the so-called *Reichstagsbrandverordnung* (Reichstag Fire Decree), suspending the protection of rights that had been integral to the liberalism of the Weimar constitution. Promptly thereafter, the Communist Party (KPD) was ferociously persecuted: their offices shut, their press banned, and their leaders arrested. The liberal parties, doomed by association with Weimar, the aftermath of the Treaty of Versailles and the present economic malaise, together with the remaining alternative opposition parties and newspapers sympathetic to them, were also relentlessly harassed by the *Sturmabteilung* (SA). Such Nazi (NSDAP) actions were both popular in petit-bourgeois, bourgeois, and conservative quarters as order-restoring measures, and legal, more or less.

On the eve of the election, March 4th, in what was proclaimed the “Day of the Awakening Nation,” Nazi-orchestrated marches and torchlight processions were held throughout Germany. In Königsberg, Hitler gave an emphatic loudspeaker address that was also broadcast nationally on the radio. He proclaimed, “In the end, we do not live for ourselves alone; rather, we are responsible for everything which those who lived before us have left behind, and we are responsible for that which we shall one day leave behind to those who must come after us. For Germany must not end with us” (2007:259-260). Still, not everyone was persuaded. In the election of March 5th some 48% of German electors cast their ballots for parties avowedly opposing Hitler and the Nazis, and an additional 8% opted for a similarly aligned yet arguably moderating nationalist party. The Nazis could claim only 288 of a possible 647 seats; 81 went to the banned Communist Party (KPD), 120 to the Social Democratic Party (SPD), 93 to the Catholic Center Party (BVP), and 52 to the Nationalist Party (DNVP). The future of Germany was by no means settled.¹ Indeed, through February and March, civil war skirmishes were widely expected between the Nazis and the forces they decried as ‘Bolsheviks’ and ‘Marxists’

On March 9th, on the occasion of the raising of Nazi banners over the Nürnberg city hall, amid ringing church bells, Julius Streicher, the leading Nürnberg Nazi and editor of the notorious

Der Stürmer, recalled, in a giddy speech, the police removal of the pioneering NSDAP members from the city building in 1924 and now their triumphant installation signifying national rebirth. In doing so, he declared: "Nuremberg, the proud city of the Meistersingers [*die stolze Meistersingerstadt*], has become German and will forever remain German! Raise high the flags!"² One week later, on March 13th, to celebrate the opening of the first Nazi-led Reichstag, Richard Wagner's one and only *Komische Oper* (comic opera),³ *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, was staged by the Nazis. Hitler and his entourage came from the Torchlight Parade to attend Act III. It was staged again on March 21st, at Berlin's *Staatsoper*, concluding the grandiose Day of Potsdam ceremonies, with Hitler and his entourage in attendance. This time during the *Wach'auf!* (Awake!) chorus, the performers, and audience as well, following Goebbels's instructions, turned to Hitler and saluted.

Several questions emerge: why a dramatic performance? why opera? why a Wagner opera? and why this five hour, three act didactic comic opera to celebrate the Nazi 'National Awakening'? Of course, Hitler and the Nazis had invoked Wagnerian themes and imagery throughout the 1920s, and might be said to have rejuvenated the Bayreuth scene and cult of Wagner thereby. Moreover, the fact that the fiftieth anniversary of Wagner's death, a momentous cultural event in many quarters, occurred on February 12th, just weeks after Hitler came to power, afforded the Nazis a timely opportunity to claim a posthumous endorsement of great historical *gravitas*. But it is still worth asking: what does the appropriation and primacy given to *Die Meistersinger* — with all of its apparent joviality and laughter — reveal about the self-understanding and aspirations of Hitler and Nazism?⁴ Put differently, the question is to grasp how the Nazi Third Reich was able to consolidate itself, mandate its agenda, behave extra-legally towards alleged enemies to the regime, institutionalize a comprehensive anti-Semitism, and draw Germany and Europe into a devastating second world war. To respond to this question requires comprehending the complex entanglements of coercion and consent, mendacity and memory, and the multiple shades in between.⁵

This paper consists of three parts. In the first, I connect the formative history of *Die Meistersinger* to Wagner's prose works. In the second, I elaborate on the dialogue and drama of the opera, emphasizing the communicative dynamics and motivational salience of laughter. In the third part, I venture three levels of correspondence and influence between *Die Meistersinger* and Hitler's Nazism.

I. 'Ones Native Home:' *Die Meistersinger* as the fulfillment of Wagner's Prose

There are Wagnerites, such as the English reviewer Corder (1882: 70, 8) who, in 1882 (the year of its eagerly-sought first performance in Britain), having pronounced *Die Meistersinger* "the composer's masterpiece, more popular than *Tristan*, more practicable than the *Nibelungen* tetralogy, more beautiful than any," are reluctant to accept "the name [of comic opera] for so grand and serious a work of Art." However, most Wagnerites, while sharing the high estimate, hail it precisely for being rooted in the mainstream of the Western comic tradition of plot and character types, from the Athenian New Comedy and its gifted playwright Menander, to the

Roman plays of Plautus and Terence, through the Renaissance and Early-Modern efforts of Shakespeare, Moliere, and Mozart.⁶ Some Wagnerites, to be sure, in addition to emphasizing suspiciously that it is his only comedy, also regard *Die Meistersinger* as the least Wagnerian and most homely (i.e. too accessible, too realistic, too diatonic, too conventional in its use of counterpoint and so forth) of his works. Regardless, all Wagnerites, including those who acknowledge weaknesses in Wagner's personal politics, insist on the polyvalent possibilities and apolitical aesthetics of his work as transcendent art. They are wrong to do so.

The presence of certain contextually relevant themes and emphases in *Die Meistersinger* together with Wagner's avowed holistic and didactic intentions, borne out by the contemporaneous and subsequent reception of this work, make certain political affinities and appropriations more plausible than others. In this case, *Die Meistersinger* figured consistently as a popular rallying evocation of German patriarchal nationalism during the Wilhelmine Reich, especially before and after the Unification of 1871 and founding of the Second Reich, and again during the Franco-Prussian War. It continued to do so during the Weimar Republic (including at the re-opened Bayreuth Festival in 1924, at the conclusion of which the anti-Versailles crowd was moved to sing '*Deutschland über Alles' en masse*). Although Thomas Mann, in 1922, disabused of Wilhelmine nostalgia could hail it for its prescriptive romantic solidaristic, democratic, and even humanist moral,⁷ he was speaking against the grain in so many ways. *Die Meistersinger* was always, including for Mann, received as an articulation of masculinist and patriarchal cultural nationalism, confirming that Germany had once enjoyed a seamless *Gemeinschaft* (an organic community), quite distinct from the *Gesellschaft* (a civil association) produced by the Weimar System of party politics, and could again.

Wagner first drafted plans for *Die Meistersinger* in 1845. He needed a mental diversion from the personal humiliation he felt at having failed in Paris (1839-41) and from the gloom of his subsequent financial crisis. He also, evidently, was seeking to reach a wider audience through a lighter style on the model of the classical Athenian satyr-play to complement his opera *Tannhäuser*. Ultimately, though, he was motivated by the "feeling of utter homelessness" in Paris that had transformed him into a patriot, one committed to "the idea: one's *Native Home* [*der Heimat*], i.e. the encirclement by a wide community of kindred and familiar souls" (1892, I: 310). For Wagner, this patriotism was non-political, i.e. not beholden to the status quo or any fixed regime, nostalgic or otherwise. Rather, what was needed was "a political interpretation of the German Home," i.e. politics in the service of cultivating this folk idea and feeling (I: 313). For that to happen, however, art, first and fundamentally, had to express the idea in its lived particularity. In the 1840s, Nürnberg and its prolific early-modern poet, Hans Sachs (1494-1576), were both enjoying a degree of cultural popularity as sites and subjects of contested national memory and were both figuring across the genres of plays, librettos, novellas, and history. These afforded Wagner rich material.⁸ From the onset, Wagner thus envisioned Sachs as "The last manifestation of the art-productive spirit of the Folk (*Volksgeist*)" and set him in contrast to comically "absurd pedanticism" (I: 329).

Comedy, however, in Wagner's somewhat idiosyncratic view, conveyed most notably in his prose manifesto *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849, *The Art-Work of the Future*), was central to the ethical and aesthetic failings with modern art and its approving dominant audiences. The art of comedy, as it is preferred in his day, depends on the personal virtuosity of the artist. Its hero, likewise, prevails through overweening egoism. Neither seeks to attain the abstract 'common ground' or, literally, "communism (*Gemeinsamkeit*)" (I: 146) and collective happiness (I: 203). Comedy flourishes accordingly among those with tastes for the superficial, the unseemly, and the ambivalent, and hence, for example, with "the lively, abstraction-hating people of France" (Wagner, 1892, I: 147). Indeed, the French, followed closely by the Italians, produce egoistic comedy so well precisely because of their cultural "unseemliness" and the extent to which they are steeped in "the only universal factor of our modern world, the spirit of *usury and speculation*" (1892, I: 147). All but invoking the notion of *Judenwitz* (Jewish wit), elsewhere Wagner (1895, IV: 68, 93-4, 165) also regards comedy and mockery as beneath great art, and criticizes Heinrich Heine, Ludwig Börne, and others for relying on such genres. By contrast, tragedy, and the tragic hero, alike "ascends into the generality" of community and fellowship (201 n.), something especially resonant in the German *Volksgeist* and consequently also in its poetry and drama. As Wagner explained in the subsequent *Eine Mittheilung an meine Freunde* (1851, *A Communication to my Friends*), artistically, then, his self-conceived challenge in drafting *Die Meistersinger* was to use the "joyous throb of life" (1892, I:294), the primal and positive "cheerfulness (*Heiterkeit*)" (I: 328), or 'mirth,' to touch the hidden mysteries of collective life, as tragedy invariably must, without lapsing towards self-centered and superficial 'irony,' as the then prevailing expectations of comedy of the foreign-influenced German public (across the three strata of "the vulgar, the philistinish, and the exquisite" (I: 352)) required on penalty of dismissing the artwork as *ennui*-inducing (I: 331, 332, 352).⁹ One might say that if Wagner esteemed Aeschylean tragedy above all, he was nonetheless prepared to attempt an Aristophanic comedy for the sake of Germany.¹⁰

The full version of *Die Meistersinger* (informed by Wagner's more than passing historical inquiries)¹¹ would await the 1860s (with second and third drafts in late 1861 and early 1862, and the music not finalized until late 1867). By then, Wagner had overcome the disappointments of the failed revolutions of 1848-9 and become steeped in the widespread optimism of nationalistic renewal that also flourished within the national social activity societies (such as gymnastics, choral groups, and sharp-shooting) and would culminate in the Unification. He was likely also positively affected by his residence in Vienna.¹² The production and premier of *Die Meistersinger*, in 1868, at the *Königliches Hof- und National-Theater* in Munich, sponsored by Ludwig II, met with great success.

The prolonged composition of *Die Meistersinger* also overlapped with some of Wagner's most pointedly political and anti-Semitic essays, namely, "*Was ist deutsch?*" (1865, *What is German?*), which included a political critique of the 'French-Jewish' conception of 'German democracy,' intended for the private edification of Ludwig II and published only in 1878),

Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik (1867-68, *German Art and German Politics*), and the revised publication in 1869 of the remarkably malicious *Das Judentum in der Musik* (*Jewishness in Music*). First published in 1850, under the pseudonym of 'K. Freigedank' (i.e. 'K. Freethought'), *Das Judentum* was Wagner's attempt to justify the popular reactionary dislike of Jews: "an instinctive repugnance against the Jew's prime essence [*instinctmäßiger Widerwille gegen das jüdische Wesen*]" (1894 [1869]:82 [12]).¹³ The people respond instinctively even involuntarily yet legitimately to what is beyond the ken of their German, European, and Christian civilizational being. Jews prove parasitic upon that being, and Wagner highlighted their effects: alienation, commodification, and ultimately "*Verjüdung*" (1869:12), meaning 'Judaization,' or literally "be-Jewing" (1894:82), a neologism that he likely coined, to convey their existential Otherness. 'The Jew,' in Wagner's reification, be he common or cultured, baptized or not, is necessarily soil-less and soul-less, cursed to wander with a "wondrous inexpressiveness [*wunderlicher Ausdruckslosigkeit*]" (92 [24]) that leaves him necessarily mutually incomprehensible to, and unrepresentative of, gentiles. He might become a pejoratively hind-sighted 'thinker' but he will never be a heroic forward-looking 'poet-prophet' (88). He will always be a subjectivity animated by vain desire for power and profit. Finally, his discursive ineptitude is fused with his physiological deformity.¹⁴

The re-publication of *Das Judentum* by Wagner, with a new and lengthy afterword (directed against the so-called Jewish Press and his critics and parodists) and in his own name, was intended to contribute negatively to the public debate regarding the legal emancipation of Jews.¹⁵ Wagner did not think that Germany was ready or right for general suffrage let alone Jewish inclusion. Indeed, of the agitation for democracy, Wagner (1895, IV: 165) lamented that "the German people is taking a large part, itself, in the playing of the shameful comedy." The emancipation would go forward anyway, controversially, on July 3rd, 1869, as a result of the general detachment of civil and political rights from religious affiliation in the constitution of the Northern German Confederacy, which two years later became the law of the Second Reich.

In all three of his major prose texts, Wagner cast Germany as an organically inter-subjective spiritual and linguistic homeland, made vulnerable by the divisive effects of the Reformation and subsequently infected by alien Jewish and French demographic elements, corrupting processes of commodification, and decidedly "un-German" democratic ideas, to wit: "Franco-Judaico-German democracy," as he (1895, IV: 165) put it in "*Was ist deutsch?*" If Wagner's conception of art was deeply influenced by his understanding of the vivid constitutive role it played in human life in classical antiquity, as *Oper und Drama* (1851, *Opera and Drama*) among other works suggests, it is also clear that for Wagner, universally, art thrives on its negation.¹⁶ Programmatically, then, the passionate renewal of the German spirit through new ennobling art would require the righteous and ongoing silencing of the false notes that had seeped into Germany, as bile does to blood. The 1850 version of *Das Judentum* closed by offering Jews, in the example of the life of the noted assimilated political writer and satirist, Börne

(born Loeb Baruch), the solution of “the redemption of Ahasuerus — *Going under!* [*die Erlösung Ahasvers, — der Untergang!*]” (100 [32]).¹⁷ This closing word is an “ambiguous” intransitive verb and not a definite noun, as Katz (1993:225-6) stresses. Still, and even if this “self-annulment [*Selbstvernichtung*]” is also understood metaphorically as self-inflicted de-Judaization, it will require what sounds decidedly like literal radical and psychologically painful assimilation: “sweat, anguish, want, and all the dregs of suffering and sorrow [*Schweiß, Noth, Aengste und Fülle des Leidens und Schmerzes*]” (100 [32]). In the 1869 *Afterword*, in closing, Wagner raises but professes to be agnostic on “Whether the downfall of our Culture can be arrested by a violent ejection of the destructive foreign element [*Ob der Verfall unsrer Cultur durch eine gewaltsame Auswerfung des zersetzenden fremden Elementes aufgehalten werden könne*]” (121 [57]), though the alternative of assimilation seems to him overburdened with “difficulties [*Schwierigkeiten*]” (122 [57]).¹⁸

II. ‘So evil a man.’ Staging the communal elimination of the Other

Die Meistersinger, though manifesting Wagner’s characteristic thematic method of operatic composition and graced with much opulent music, is more vocal and less declamatory than his other major works, and also arguably more autobiographical. It is also, as its very title indicates, more precisely rooted in a distinct place, albeit one imbued with mid-19th century nostalgia for a coherent and contained pre-modern urban world even as that world was finally being abolished by modern transnational commerce. This mythic idealization of Nürnberg minimizes, moreover, the extent to which the urban-bourgeois guild-economy was actually already a highly stratified, diversified, and commercialized cosmopolitan centre. Wagner’s historical sketch also leaves unstated the fact that this was the destabilizing era and locale of Martin Luther (as well as of Albrecht Dürer) and the Protestant Reformation. Also conspicuously absent was the stabilizing role of the Emperor or any other wholly political authority figure.¹⁹

The setting is late-Medieval Nürnberg, on the eve of *Johannistag* (St. John’s day), and Act I opens in the Church of St. Katherine to the strains of a Bach chorale, concluding an afternoon service on the vigil of the Feast. The church is also a meeting-place for the guild of *Meistersingers*. We soon learn that a young Franconian knight, “the last survivor of his race [*als seines Stammes letzter Spross*]” (113 [112]),²⁰ Walther von Stolzing, madly smitten, seeks the hand of his newly beloved, Eva Pogner. However, Eva’s father, Veit Pogner, a *Meistersinger* and wealthy goldsmith (the ostensible socio-economic patriarch of the opera), has already announced dramatically that he intends to give Eva’s hand, together with the rights to all his property (93), to the winner of the *Meistersinger* guild’s song contest the following day. Eva is free to refuse the winner but must marry a *Meister*. Walther, who represents at once the Medieval past and the future to come, is clueless about the guild and, in fact, formally unschooled, laughably so to the prentices (61, 65) and *Meisters* (235) alike. Nevertheless, he lies. He explains that he has come to Nürnberg to become a *Meister* (71), and tries to qualify for the music contest, claiming to be versed in the poetry of the esteemed actual *Minnesinger* Walther von der

Vogelweide (c.1170-c.1230) and to have been taught music by nature and the birds. He even insinuates, arrogantly, that he is like a wondrous golden bird that soars above mere common varieties (many of the *Meisters* have ordinary bird surnames).

The guild's traditional compositional (rhetorical and tonal) rules, engraved on a *Tabulatur* and duly explained,²¹ are many. Among them are, crucially, that 'qualifying' requires fluency in more than a hundred *Töne* (tunes/tones), and 'mastery' the creation, from an original poem and drawing on that range of tunes, of a memorable song or strophe that takes the 'Bar' form a-a-b: an *Abgesang* of two *Stollen* (or stanzas, *pedes*) with matching melody and rhyme, and an *Absegung* (or after-song, *cauda*), equal in length to the two *Stollen* and in a distinct melody. In demonstrating mastery only seven faults are permitted. Ironically, the delivery of Walther's explanation of his musical training fits this correct form (117) (demonstrating to an attentive audience that he could effortlessly do so) even though his trial song on love (a subject he insists is sacred not secular), which he generates in a state of excitement, runs afoul of the rules and is found to be too impulsively free-form.

Crucially, Walther is undermined in his efforts to qualify by the exuberantly trenchant chalk-marking and sneering of the appointed *Merker* (Marker), one *Meistersinger* Sixtus Beckmesser. Most of the guild's other pedantic members, a dozen *Bürger Meisters* from different professions, following Beckmesser, reject Walther and his song amid considerable generational tumult. The youthful prentices affirm Walther's primordial iconoclasm but "the Masters cannot restrain their laughter [*Die Meister müssen lachen*]" (137 [136]). Beckmesser, for his part, contends effrontedly: "he surely means to mock us! [*Wär's nicht bur uns zu bethören*]" (153 [152]). Only *Meistersinger* Hans Sachs, a respected poet and diligent cobbler, fully appreciates Walther's raw musical authenticity and even finds himself captivated by its strangely old yet new musicality. Walther, disqualified, departs disdainfully. Though he swears off martial recourse to his sword, over the course of the opera Walther will be tempted repeatedly to use it, which if it sometimes seems a bit anachronistically and comically impetuous in the manner of *Don Quixote*, also ensures an undercurrent of the threat of violence.

In the drama of Act II, which opens in the evening on a Nürnberg street, we are led to realize that the well-liked, elderly, widowed and childless Sachs — who had earlier argued that "the people [*das Volk*]" (101 [100]) ought to decide the singing contest, on the grounds that an uninstructed female mind will better align with the choice of the crowd than with the learned (99) — loves young Eva and despite his age had likely contemplated marrying her. The other *Meisters* regarded his notion of heeding the public voice as anarchic and "absurd [*keinen Sinn*]" (101 [100]).

The main song contestant, as it happens, is Walther's Marker, Beckmesser, a spiteful and stridently anti-democratic yet powerful and *hochgelahrt* (highly educated) *Stadtschreiber* (town clerk), with his dubiously Latinate first name, Sixtus. Though also of advanced years, Beckmesser was one of the few eligible bachelors among the *Meisters*. Indeed, until now he thought himself most likely to win. Evidently, he had been pressuring Eva's father for the opportunity to secure her. In an early aside, we also learn that he will try to rig the contest by serenading

Eva privately beforehand with his intended contest-song (73). Moreover, in addition to mockingly dispatching Walther, he had spoken against allowing Eva to veto the winner. Finally, he also tries to humiliate Sachs by stressing his lowly trade as a “cobbler-man [*Schuster*]” (107 [106], 149, 271, 277) turned street-singer. Sachs is more inclined to refer to himself as a “shoe-maker [*Schuhmacher*]” (265 [264]). We are not supposed to like anything about Beckmesser.

Though Beckmesser *qua* incongruously incapable expert and dubiously older suitor matches recurring comic characters who get abused — the pedant in Greek comedy, the *buffo Dottore* and *Pantalone* in the Renaissance *commedia dell'arte*, and the self-made butt in Shakespeare (e.g. Malvolio or Falstaff) — he was also a ready fulfillment of German anti-Semitic expectations of the sort that figured in the Early-Modern *Fastnachtspiel* (for which the real Sachs was famous) as well as, unmistakably, in Wagner's own *Das Judenthum*. He is not a Jew. Historically speaking, no Jew could have occupied a state post, and moreover, as Wagner no doubt knew, Nürnberg was one of the first German cities to become Lutheran and expel Jews. However, Beckmesser is intended to be recognizably and discrepantly alien and Jewish. That is, through the lyrics, the accompanying music, the action, and the stage directions Wagner mobilizes all his dramatic resources and considerable talents to render Beckmesser as a ridiculous yet hidden, i.e. ‘cultured’ Jewish ‘comic hero’ precisely according to the terms of *Das Judenthum*.²² In physical (shuffling, sweating, blinking,), behavioral (suspicious, scheming, scornful), and linguistic (accented, babbling, falsetto screeching) respects Beckmesser is intended to be a laughable yet unlikeable Semitic caricature lacking even the partial character dimensions Wagner grants his other villains.²³ It is insinuated that Beckmesser's real motive is not love of Eva but avarice for the Pogner estate (69, 299), an avarice made evident when he projects it by accusation upon Sachs's intentions (393). Walther takes an immediate dislike to him, suggesting that like belligerent Winter he is “a hiding craven [*verstecken*]” (133 [132]). Similarly, and anticipating the climactic ruining, in phrasing that ruptures the confines of the comedy-genre, Sachs pronounces the justificatory judgment on Beckmesser: “I never met with so evil a man [*So ganz boshaft doch keinen ich fand*]” (415 [414]).

Eva, who visits Sachs, makes it known that she would certainly prefer him to Beckmesser, but that she is in love with the disqualified Walther. Eva's father shares these preferences. Sachs thereupon renounces his own intentions and nobly declines Eva's subtle suggestion, resolving instead to aid Walther and Eva (including preventing what will otherwise be a shameful nocturnal elopement). He hangs a lantern so as to foil their attempted escape under cover of darkness, and they have to retreat into the shadows and wait trapped while he, well aware of their presence, sings a poignantly and didactically topical yet “jovial song [*frischen Gesang*]” (261 [260]), including allusions to them as Adam and Eve cast out of Paradise, to himself as the angelic cobbler preparing shoes for the painful road to Heaven, as well as on his own poignant pain in foregoing Eva.

Beckmesser arrives, lute in hand, and attempts to serenade Eva (or rather Magdalene, Eva's nurse-maid, who was masquerading as Eva to aid the stalled elopement) who is demurely

posed at her high window. Walther, still hiding with Eva, comments “That’s real retribution: it sets me grinning [*Das heiss’ ich vergelten: fast muss ich lachen*]” (269 [268]). Sachs then proceeds to toy with Beckmesser, singing a raucous cobbler’s song while noisily hammering away at a pair of Beckmesser’s shoes he happens to be fixing. To silence Sachs Beckmesser praises him effusively and pleads for him to stop and listen to his song so that he might act as a *de facto* Marker and advise on its improvement. Sachs does not, and Beckmesser then reveals his inner spite: asserting his own superiority; accusing Sachs of envy; and promising that he will never be a true Marker. Beckmesser then endeavors to serenade anyway, at which point, feigning belated helpfulness Sachs now offers to hammer to mark Beckmesser’s errors, so that he might improve his singing while the shoes are also completed. Beckmesser agrees reluctantly and launches into song. However, while technically correct his singing is poorly enunciated with false accents and, though he claims to have a “powerful base [*Stimme Stärk*]” (287 [286]), it verges towards falsetto screeching. It is also *gauche* and given to *coloratura* excesses. The awkward and stilted score, “undoubtedly true musical humor” in Gilbert’s (1926:48) estimate, complements Beckmesser’s comic ineptitude.²⁴ There are, in short, many levels of error. Beckmesser is torn comically between the competing distractions of Magdalene’s falsely alluring poses and Sachs’s frenetic corrective hammering. The latter prompts Beckmesser to complain to Sachs: “[I]s this a jest? [*Treibt ihr hier Scherz?*]” (291 [290]) or a combative “plot? [*streiten?*]” (293 [292]). If this interaction closely mirrors and mocks Beckmesser’s own disruptive marking of Walther earlier it is nonetheless also sabotage by Sachs, forcing Beckmesser’s affected elegance to be off-tempo and voluble. As Wagner’s stage-direction tells us, it “increases the comic effect of his doggerel performance [*was das Komische seines gänzlich prosodielosen Vortrages sehr vermehrte*]” (297 [296]). Sachs, I would note, having reluctantly relinquished Eva, takes some substantial consoling pleasure of superiority in undoing Beckmesser, for as the stage directions specify: “He laughs loudly [*Er Lacht laut*]” (305 [304]).

The resulting noise — singing, arguing, hammering, laughing — wakes everyone including Magdalene’s actual love interest, David (Sachs’s apprentice). Beckmesser, caught in the throes of wooing, takes a physical beating from David who believes him to be courting his Magdalene and acts on his sense of violation. Neighbors also enter the fray and are soon venting their own grievances against one another resulting in a tumult made grander by the marvel of Wagner’s polyphonic arrangement. Meanwhile, Sachs corners our still hiding young couple, sends Eva back to her home, and makes Walther come home with him.

Nürnberg, with its hierarchic and patriarchic order, is rendered nostalgically by Wagner. However, Wagner also discloses that there are social tensions between burghers and the rest (recall that Pogner offers his daughter and his estate at the onset as proof that the *Bürger*s are genuinely committed to the community), between guilds, within guilds and their respective Masters, journeymen, and apprentices, and between all of these male public figures and the private women. It is only with the re-appearance of local authority in the form of the uniformed night-watchman calling out the hour that everyone suspends their contentious violence and

disperses. However, this is only a mechanical and institutional authority, since the underlying social tensions remain. Nürnberg still awaits some magical restoration into a heart-felt community.²⁵

Act III opens on the morning of *Johannistag* with Sachs in his workshop engrossed in a book on the history of the world, and meditating upon the willfully “mad [*Wahn!*]” (353 [352]) and destructive dynamics of life (including last night’s events). ‘*Wahn*’ is, of course, a weighty notion, encompassing madness, delusion, illusion, and irrationality, but also crazy comedy (*Schuster*). Sachs here is at his most Schopenhauerian.²⁶ We are to understand that Sachs is literally alone with his world-weariness, which he nonetheless meets with cheerful resignation (*freudiges*), and hence that he is all the more justified in supposedly benignly manipulating the actions of others around him for noble ends. Walther awakes and they share knowing laughter over the previous evening’s events before Walther recounts to Sachs his wondrous Midsummer’s morning-dream of a woman beneath the “Tree of Life.”²⁷ Sachs transcribes and matches Walther’s words with traditional notions of aesthetic poetic form in a pleasing verse. This is followed by a second *Bar* (verse), on an evening dream of a woman beneath a Laurel tree. Sachs is deeply moved; Walther is exhausted. Though a third *Bar* is still needed, they retire to dress for the coming festivities.

Beckmesser, well-dressed for the imminent festivities though also bruised and sore, visits Sachs. The chaotic score, at this moment, conveys Beckmesser’s frantic mental state. Initially alone, he finds Walther’s unfinished two verses. Presuming them to be Sachs’s own effort to enter and win the contest, he pockets them. Sachs reappears and the two of them engage in a mutually antagonistic exchange that suggests long-standing friction. Beckmesser castigates Sachs for the flimsy quality of his shoes, while Sachs blames the poor quality of Beckmesser’s singing for the excessively hammered soles. “A merry jest! [*Schon gut der Witz!*]” (391 [390]), exclaims Beckmesser sarcastically. Each blames the other for having ulterior motives in instigating the violence that proved near-fatal to Beckmesser the previous night. Beckmesser shows that he is aware that he was the victim of Sachs’ “ill-timed jesting [*lust-gen Scherzen*]” (407 [406]).

Sachs, then, realizing that Beckmesser has stolen Walther’s inspired song, changes his tone and strategy. Though Sachs had derailed Beckmesser the previous night, he yet blames him: “some glowworm could not find his mate; ‘Twas he aroused this wrath and hate [*Ein Glühwurm fand sein Weibchen nicht; der hat den Schaden angericht*]” (357 [356]).²⁸ Sachs nonetheless now knowingly lets him take the script, even promising that he will not claim the song as his own. Beckmesser is delighted, since his own contest-song had failed so miserably the previous night, and before departing, his prospects restored, he even hails Sachs and allows that he might yet prove worthy of becoming a Marker.

Eva, upset that Walther has fared so poorly, also visits Sachs, to complain literally and metaphorically about her ‘tight shoes.’ Walther, knightly dressed and freshly inspired by her admiring presence, effortlessly generates a final, pointedly concrete, third *Bar*. Sachs suppresses his own feelings behind comic double entendres. The couple then convey their

gratitude to Sachs, whose self-restraint and generous approval (of the romantic pairings of noble Walther and Eva, and plebian David and Magdalene, alike), prevailing over any personal sense of loss or resentment he may have harbored, are made abundantly clear. True to his symbolic status as John the Baptist, and in a long sequence both solemn yet comic, “hiding his intense emotion beneath a mask of humour,” as Corder (1882:69) suggests, he baptizes Walther’s new song: “A child here was created [*Ein Kind ward hier geboren*]” (437 [436]). The audience is to admire Sachs for his magnanimity and to be moved by this momentous christening.

The climactic *Festwiese* is situated in an open meadow, by the Pegnitz River, outside the city. The mood is one of “merry-making [*lustig*]” (451 [450]). The ceremonial procession begins with the city guild members (shoemakers, tailors, bakers, and apprentices, and finally, *Meistersingers*) and the citizens entering according to their social status before all gathering together. Sachs arrives and is honored by the people as their favorite *Meistersinger* with cries of “*Heil! Sachs!*” (466). They also sing to him the opening lines of the well-known song composed by the real Sachs to honor Luther as a nightingale: ‘*Die Wittembergisch Nachtigall, die man jetzt Höret überall!*’ Sachs, in turn, after a “long silence of deep feeling” (467), conveys his humility and gratitude to them in a song that begins quietly and haltingly but rises to loud and moving self-assurance. For Wagner, song is speech raised to its apogee, and as such, Sachs’s song here is meant to be a model of declamatory delivery.

The contest to win Eva’s hand begins and Beckmesser, as the oldest contestant, goes first. Still shaky from his beating the night before, he is made more awkward by the new flattened shoes Sachs has fitted for him. He is also overtaken by “perspiration [*Schweiss*]” (473 [472]). Amid low-grade mockery: “The boys snigger [*Die Buben lachen*]” (477 [476]), and partially self-repressed heckling: “Hush! Leave off your silly jest! [*Still! macht keinen Witz!*]” (477 [476]) from the people, Beckmesser tries to sing (or mimic really) the poetic words of Walther, but slips and flops badly. His memory and melody both fail him and he improvises atrociously. The words come off as “nonsense [*Unsinn*]” (483 [482]), “wrong [*entstellt*]” (489 [488]), and unmelodious (as Sachs knew they would).²⁹ As a matter of fact, Beckmesser’s departures from the text are carefully written by Wagner both to provide comic spoonerisms and, more so, to reveal Beckmesser’s innermost preoccupations with commerce, gold, and death. The people, in turn, pass side-comments, including notably on the morbid stakes: “Charming wooer! He’ll soon get his due; Suspend on the gallows [*Galgen*], that’s what he’ll do!” (483 [482]), (better rendered as, “I can see it coming,”), and shortly thereafter, decisively, “all burst into a peal of loud laughter [*bricht Alles in lautes, schallendes Gelächter aus*]” (485 [484]). Again, Beckmesser, no less than the unintentional proto-Dada ‘automatism’ of his oral delivery, is meant by Wagner, whose score allowed Beckmesser only a thin minstrel lute for accompaniment, to elicit no sympathy from the opera’s audience. Beckmesser’s best effort resulted in rules without art producing form without content by a man without heart. Beckmesser promptly turns on Sachs, “Accursed cobbler! [*Verdammter Schuster!*]” (485 [484]), and blames him for the song, before “He rushes away furiously and disappears into the crowd [*Er stürzt wüthend fort und verliert*

sich unter dem Volke]" (485 [484]). Again, as with the climaxes of Act I and II, there is "Great confusion [*Grosser Aufstand*]" (485 [484]), but this time we will witness a moving resolution.

Beauty is what is ultimately at stake. Sachs refuses to take any credit for what he nonetheless characterizes as a beautiful song if sung truly, to which the people respond uncertainly: "Sachs is in fun! He's cutting his jokes! [*Hört! Sachs macht Spass! Er sagt's zur Lust*]" (489 [488]). Feigning an injured reputation he asks for the real author to prove that the song is superlative by singing it properly. The other *Meisters* realize that Sachs is being sly but nonetheless acquiesce to the evasion of the rules. Walther, though he failed to qualify, thereby gets to sing his christened *Selige Morgentraumdeut-Weise* (*Blessed Morning-Dream Melody*). He too departs the text, improvising on the spot to transform the three verses into an enlivened single song with two *Stollen* and an *Abgesang*. He does so with forthright fulsomeness, although also with the benefit of the full orchestra that Wagner's score affords him as well as the entire chorus joining in the swelling melody. Unsurprisingly, he captivates both the *Meisters* and the people. The latter acclaim him the winner through a *de facto* plebiscite without debate, vote, or objections from the 'awakened' *Meisters*. Again, though outside of the rules, the people effectively get to choose *en masse*, as Sachs had earlier argued they should, and Walther wins the contest and thereby also Eva's consenting hand.

This happy ending is only possible because of Sachs. Walther initially rebuffs the traditional myrtle prize wreath. However, Sachs persuades him that though he is "born to be a master [*Meister ward geboren*]" (215 [214]), indeed that he is all but the messianic new man,³⁰ Walther must "Honor your German Masters [*ehrt eure deutsches Meister*]" (509 [508]). The ending thus reflects a new and realizable rather than utopian blending of traditional normative poetics with authentic innovation. It is also, amid communal laughter at the ostracized yet internalized Beckmesser, a civic recognition of its 'real' values once the domestic hindering imposter is punitively proscribed. Nürnberg needed this cathartic yet containable focus, as its erstwhile propensity to generalized and self-destructive social violence earlier showed. Consequently, everyone conveys their grateful recognition of Sachs's essential role, at once artistic and political. Eva crowns Sachs with Walther's prize wreath; Walther and Eva stand on either side of him; Pogner kneels before him; and the other *Meistersingers* extend their hands adoringly.³¹ As Sachs puts it, as a collective realization he forces upon everyone: "For while they dwell in every heart, though should depart the pride of holy Rome [through *welsch* (foreign) intervention], still thrives at home our sacred German art! [*Und gebt ihr ihrem Wirken Gunst, zerging' in Dunst das heil'ge röm'sche Reich, uns bliebe gleich die heil'ge deutsche Kunst!*]" (509 [508]). Beauty will prevail.

III. 'Germany Awake!': *Die Meistersinger* as inspiration for Hitler's Nazism

Hitler loved his Wagner,³² and had evidently done so since his teenaged attendance of performances first in Linz, and then at the *Hofoper* in Vienna, perhaps the best opera house in Europe. In 1923, Houston Stewart Chamberlain befriended and drew him into the Bayreuth circle, as the potential fulfillment of his own *Politische Ideale* (1915, *Political Ideals*). Hitler, for

his part, echoed Sachs's '*Wach'auf*'[awake]' phrase in Nazi calls to Germany to awaken in the early 1920s. He invoked Wagner's example of self-willed yet contested genius, and likely saw a parallel to his own misunderstood and maligned emergence, in his closing address in the *Putsch* trial before the People's Court of Justice at Munich on March 27, 1924. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler placed Wagner in the exalted pantheon with Frederick the Great and Martin Luther (1939: 23, 287). There is also the odd Wagnerian reference: such as to the "Germanic Siegfried" (514, see also 194, 343, 912). The text itself is further peppered with pejorative variants of Sachs's lament about the world: '*Wahn*' and '*Wahnwitz*' to identify the targets of his hostility. Moreover, in his retrospective explanation of his own anti-Semitism — a dramatic encounter with a caftan-wearing Eastern Jew in a Viennese backstreet — Hitler essentially stages the instinctive repugnance that Wagner requires of him. Finally, it might even be suggested that in the speechmaking style he cultivated, namely, rising from quiet humility to declamatory bombast, Hitler emulated the delivery of Sachs's speech at the grand start of the *Feistweise* scene in Act III. More generally, in fact, even Wagner's innovative reliance on motifs and expressive repetition seems to have been adopted by Hitler in his understanding of effective propaganda.³³

So it was, then, that the fiftieth anniversary of Wagner's death, just two weeks after Hitler and the Nazis came to power, took on near cosmic significance. One of Chancellor Hitler's first public acts was to participate in the Wagner memorial celebration, on February 12th, in Leipzig, Wagner's birthplace. Hitler also made a well-publicized visit to the graves of Richard, Cosima, and Siegfried Wagner on July 30th, and later that year, on August 12th, took part in a Richard Wagner Celebration at Neuschwanstein, at which event he was given the freedom of Hohenschwangau.

Moreover, not only was there a celebratory evening performance of *Die Meistersinger* on the Day of Potsdam but the actual state ceremony, carefully staged by Goebbels, played out with the venerable Hindenburg allowed to act as Sachs passing the mantle of authority to the youthful Hitler as Walther. This was a good deal more plausible, it must be conceded, than Mann's attempt in 1922 to cast the new Republic's first President, Friedrich Ebert, as Walther. As Hitler explained: "It was to this young Germany that you, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, entrusted the leadership of the Reich in your magnanimous decision of January 30th, 1933. In the conviction that the German *Volk* should also give its consent to the New Order of German life, we men of this National Government addressed a final appeal to the German nation" (Hitler, 2007:272).

Die Meistersinger was staged again in August of 1933, and Hitler also attended a performance in the Frankfurt Opera House, on October 30th, 1933. On March 6th of 1934, in addition to visiting the Saxon Exhibition (*Sachsenfleiss*) and the Technology Fair and the Saar Exhibition in Leipzig, Hitler participated in a Wagner memorial service combined with the laying of a cornerstone for a National Monument to Wagner. Frau Winifred Wagner was also in attendance. In an effusive speech, his voice choked with emotion, Hitler (2007:439) declared Wagner one of the few great men who: "personifying the essence of what is best in our *Volk*, rose from

national German greatness to international renown." Appositely, in 1933 the Nazis honored Wagner with the issuance of a commemorative series of eight stamps (more or less the first honorific stamps to be issued under the Nazis), each one tied to an individual opera, including one for *Die Meistersinger* associated with the theme of German charity.

The Nazis subsequently made *Die Meistersinger* the model *deutsche Volksoper* (German folk-opera) to be staged at the annual *Reichsparteitage* (Reich National Party Convention) in Nürnberg for the duration of the regime. Hitler's attendance at the 1934 Bayreuth production, which featured crowd scenes of some 800 performers, was a major media event, and to the very end, despite the resource-constraints of World War II, *Die Meistersinger* remained as the lone opera of the 1943 and 1944 Bayreuth *Kriegsfestspiele*. More generally, over the course of the 1930s, the Nazis relied readily on Wagner as allegory, as symbol, as soundtrack, and as propaganda.³⁴ Thus for example, on August 6th, 1934, Hindenburg was laid to rest, to the mournful strains of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. The prelude to Act III of *Die Meistersinger* accompanied shots of Nürnberg at daybreak in the Nazi filmic self-glorification, the quasi-documentary on the 1934 Nürnberg rally: Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. On January 3rd, 1935, at the rally of national leadership at the Berlin State Opera, to persuade the NSDAP and the Reichswehr to work together, a specially selected ensemble, conducted by General Music Director Erich Kleiber, presented Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, staged for the sole enjoyment of this elite "German Leadership."

Hitler, of course, attended the Bayreuth festival every year, and seized other opportunities to attend productions of *Die Meistersinger* (and, of course, other Wagner operas), for example, on June 22nd, 1935 at the Reich Theater Festival, in Hamburg, and then again on November 15th after sitting in on a session of the Reich Chamber of Culture in the Philharmonic Concert Hall in Berlin, he also attended a performance of *Die Meistersinger* marking the opening of the newly renovated German Opera House in Berlin-Charlottenburg.³⁵

The Nazis entered a new phase of confidence and independence in cultural production in 1938, and Wagner was fully represented. On January 22, 1938, with admiring Yugoslavian guests in tow, Hitler attended the inauguration of the German Architecture and Industrial Art Exhibition in the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* (House of German Art) in Munich. Architecture promised to surpass fine art as a reflection of the creative German essence, and this exhibition filled with models of envisioned monumental construction projects, and the furniture they might house, was intended to prove it. Hitler's (2007:1003) speech on that occasion positively channeled Wagnerian wishful thinking:

And finally, do not forget: the curtain is being opened this very hour — for the first time before the eyes of a large audience — to reveal works which are destined to leave their mark not on decades, but on centuries! At this very moment they shall undergo the consecration so splendidly expressed in the *Meistersinger*: "Ein Kind ward hier geboren" (here a child was born). These are architectural achievements of intrinsic eternal value and ones which will stand forever according to human standards, firm and unshakeable, immortal in their beauty and in their harmonious proportions!

On May 22nd, 1938, on the commemoration of Richard Wagner's 125th birthday, Hitler established the Richard Wagner Research Institute in Bayreuth. Later that year, Wagner was the singular named example of Great German music in Hitler's (2007:1263) big 'culture speech,' of December 10th, in Munich to open the Second German Architecture and Industrial Art Exhibition in the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* — a speech that insinuated that the opera houses and theaters will become what the churches of the past were and more: "For the first time in its history, the German Reich has its foundation in the willpower and consciousness of the German Volk."

Is it too much to suggest,³⁶ then, that *Die Meistersinger* qua nationalistic and anti-Semitic opera, mingling fact and fiction, tradition and dramatic innovation, with all of its banal soulfulness and judging laughter, resonated closely with Hitler's own political career,³⁷ social theory and Nazi plans because it had in part inspired them³⁸ (as well as the *Weltanschauung* of others among the party elite).³⁹ Streicher, speaking in Nürnberg on March 9th, 1933, drew the explicit association: "Once Hans Sachs was hailed by the citizens of Nuremberg on the festival grounds. Today, all of Nuremberg celebrates Adolf Hitler [*Einst ist hans Sachs auf der Festwiese von den Nürnberger gefeiert worden, heute jubelt ganz Nürnberg Adolf Hitler zu*]."⁴⁰ Let me suggest three levels of relevance: first, as an aesthetic reaction against degenerate modernism; second, demonstrating the extra-political role of the leader; and third, exemplifying the communal expulsion of the inner enemy.

First, *Die Meistersinger* defended Wagner's own inflated self-concept as a self-taught and inspired heroic artist-musician (Walther) yet heir to Goethe and Bach (Sachs), innovating brilliantly in the new music genre of *Musikdrama* amid the otherwise stultifying compositional rules and misplaced formalism of his day.⁴¹ Like Walther, who fulfilled the rules effortlessly and incidentally at the onset but in wanting to sing authentically also surpasses them, Wagner composes a three act opera that fulfills the form of the master-song: two matching *Stollen* and an *Abgesang* equal in length to both together but in a new melody. Whereas Act I ended with the tumult generated by the superficial and frustrating reaction of 'experts' and 'critics' to Walther's unconventional authenticity, and Act II with the initially satisfying plebian violence visited upon Beckmesser that however becomes problematically generalized and self-directed, Act III delivers a harmonious aesthetic resolution. Appositely, Cosima Wagner records that Wagner, looking back on April 1st, 1874, held the view that this opera, in particular, was "right for a German, no pathos, no ecstasy, but emotional depth, good humour, on this foundation there is hope, it is what I like to think."⁴² *Die Meistersinger* was Wagner's art-centric,⁴³ acting out of the middle-class, nostalgic, classicist, nationalistic cultural reaction against the first wave of modernization and market consolidation in favor of the regeneration of idealized traditional German values and communalism.⁴⁴ No mere memorial however, it was a prescriptive parable on how to prevent the *Gemeinschaft* from becoming a *Gesellschaft*. Its momentum was forward-looking, designed for the rising mass spectator and consumer culture of music, and revolving around strategic innovation,⁴⁵ and as such, it would prove especially well suited

to the nationalistic cultural reaction unleashed by the Nazis against the Weimar second wave of modernization and industrialization. Quite appropriately then, '*Deutschland erwache!*' echoing Sachs, was to become the rallying Nazi slogan, and the *Horst Wessel Lied* was self-consciously adopted as the morning-dream melody by a Nazi Walther. More fundamentally, this is why aesthetic renewal was central to Hitler's agenda for the Third Reich.

Second, the performance, closing with "*Heil Sachs! Hans Sachs! Heil Nürnberg's theurem Sachs!*" (510), effectively articulated what would become Hitler's *Führer-Prinzip* of the artistic "great man" (1939:849) able to manage "public opinion [*öffentliche Meinung*]" (1939 [1943]:510 [404]).⁴⁶ As the nation's inspired matchmaker Sachs was ready to use dubious means because he knew that the proof of the excellence of a regime of rules is that it can also allow for 'exceptions' [*Ausnahme*] (491 [490]). In my view, though not the one that Wagner intends for us, Sachs is not merely an evasive *iron* but a morally problematic manipulative actor, who feigns and cheats Beckmesser (especially, although also actually everyone), and for whom the end (or exception) justifies the means (or rule) (357).⁴⁷ The end, which Sachs articulates at the onset, is the waxing of "Patriotism and Art [*Dass Volk und Kunst*]" (105 [104]), i.e. living within an inter-subjectively shared meta-political, post-imperial, hyper-aesthetic realm. Since he succeeds, the on-looking public (and we too in the audience having enjoyed being privy to the scope of his ingenuity in *commedia del arte* fashion) approve of Sachs's machination: "It was well-devised! [*Das war schön erdacht!*]" (503 [502]). Recall that, already in 1921 in an essay on '*Die Diktatur*,' Carl Schmitt had affirmed the dictatorial emergency powers of the *Reichspräsident* under the Weimar constitution, and in 1922, in '*Politische Theologie*' placed decision-making control over the invocation of the Sachsian 'exception' (*Ausnahme*) at the conceptual and practical core of political 'sovereignty'. The Nazi regime that was established, beginning in 1933, was legitimized by such notions of extralegal and plebiscitary authority. It was, in effect, an *Ausnahmestaat* (extralegal state).⁴⁸

Finally, *Die Meistersinger* offered a model of social diagnosis and treatment: an internal yet potentially externalizable source — a scapegoat — for Germany's madness, illness and uncertainty, and as such a welcome target for the pleasures of public laughter and the consolations of collective social violence. That such disciplining occurs in comedy genres regularly, and sometimes quite cruelly, should not diminish the fact that the character dynamics of this opera play out on near biblical proportions — with Walther as Adam (if not the Messiah; and also momentarily David *contra* Goliath), Eva as Eve (and also briefly the Muse of Parnassus), Sachs as the cobbling angel of Paradise fitting shoes as divine comfort for humanity having been expelled from Paradise (though also Hans-Johannes-John the Baptist), and Beckmesser as the Devil. Yet in addition, in rendering Beckmesser ridiculous *qua* Jew, the opera also singles out and concentrates its animus upon a member of a recognizable sociological group at a time when public debate was pre-occupied with the political status of just this group.⁴⁹

Wagner felt that the aspiring truly German artists and musicians, like him, were subject to concerted campaigns of mockery and persecution by the Jewish-dominated art establish-

ments of the modern age.⁵⁰ Appositely, reflecting on the reception of Wagner, Nietzsche (1983:198, 235, 205), in 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth' (1876), ambivalently noted both that "everything Wagner does and thinks has indeed been parodied," that he is subject to "systematic levity" and that, in Nietzsche's view too, "Wagner's life has ... much of the comedy about it, and markedly grotesque comedy at that." In any event, *Die Meistersinger* was Wagner's turn to mock his enemies back.⁵¹ For Wagner, in *Das Judenthum*, the Jewish artist (musician, singer, actor, and all prominent manifestations of the 'cultured Jew,' though he had Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer specifically in his sights) is doomed to artless and unfeeling mimicry, by virtue of his "semitic [*semitischen*]" (85 [15]) physiology, pronunciation, and performance. In Wagner's view, as a matter of inner essence, then, "The Jew has never had an Art of his own, hence never a Life of art-enabling import: an import, a universally applicable, a human import [*Der Jude hat nie eine eigene Kunst gehabt, daher ein Leben von kunstfähigem Gehalte: ein Gehalt, ein allgemeingiltiger menschlicher Gehalt*]" (90 [21]). This failure of the Jew to be, in effect, human might be sympathetically tragic were it not for his misplaced vanity regarding his abundant specific failings. This prompts and fully warrants, instead then, the reaction of '*Lächerlichkeit*' (ridiculousness, absurdity, or literally laughability), a term that figures four times (between pages 13-24) in Wagner's own characterization of Jews, Jewishness, and the synagogal:

We can conceive no representation of an antique or modern stage-character by a Jew, be it as hero or lover, without feeling instinctively the incongruity of such a notion [*Wir können uns auf der Bühne keinen antiken oder modernen Charakter, sei es ein Held oder ein Liebender, von einem Juden dargestellt denken, ohne unwillkürlich das bis zur Lächerlichkeit Ungeeignete einer solchen Vorstellung zu empfinden*] (83 [13]).⁵²

For Wagner, this was especially true if the Jew tried to sing: "All that worked repellently upon us in his outward appearance and his speech, makes us take to our heels at last in his Song, providing we are not held prisoners by the very ridicule [*lächerlich*] of this phenomenon" (86 [16]).⁵³ In sum, "What issues from the Jews' attempts at making Art, must necessarily therefore bear the attributes of coldness and indifference, even to triviality and absurdity [*Was so der Vornahme der Juden, Kunst zu machen, entspringt, muß daher nothwendig die Eigenschaft der Kälte, der Gleichgiltigkeit, bis zur Trivialität und Lächerlichkeit an sich haben*]" (93 [24]). To put Wagner's characterization in the contemporaneous street idiom, the Jew is a *schlemiel* (ridiculously inept and clumsy person) doomed to *Mauscheln* (the deceptive speech of the Jewish trader), as Millington (2006:5) observes. He merits mockery. Hitler's understanding of the modern cultural condition, as articulated in *Mein Kampf* as well as in his many 'culture' speeches as Chancellor, echoed Wagner conceptually and idiomatically in these respects. Contemporary degeneracy is a function of "Judaization [*Verjudung*]" and "mammonization [*Mammonisierung*]" of spirit and love (337 [270]). Despite his best efforts, every Jewish artist, necessarily though unintentionally, was "a wretched comedian [*einen jammervollen Komödianten*]" (418 [332]). Finally, Hitler's critical analysis is peppered with the pejorative '*Lächerlichkeit*' variants of which appear some seventy times in *Mein Kampf*.

Notably, then, though the pedantic, parasitic, 'semitic,' and necessarily derivatively artistic

Beckmesser laughs early, we (siding with Sachs *et al.*) get to laugh last and down at him. He is outwitted, badly beaten, and the prospect of an execution is entertained before he is finally exposed and humiliated. Wagner's critics might argue further that his disappearance into the crowd amounts to inner exile, ghettoization, or even elimination.⁵⁴ In *Das Judenthum*, Wagner had expressed the anti-Semitic wish that "through his very laying bare, may we even hope to rout the demon from the field" (82). He also volunteers what would become Hitler's favorite metaphoric system: a civilizational body beset by parasitic insects and decomposing worms (99). Conversely, Wagner's defenders can and do emphasize, that the central dynamic of the opera is a dialectical one between tradition and innovation, resolved through provoked self-awareness and inspirational love.⁵⁵ Furthermore, though implausibly in my view, they maintain that what is banished is a faulty or ossified traditional aesthetics and Beckmesser's role as Marker in maintaining it, while Beckmesser himself remains available for later participation (or at least assimilation) in the redemptive democratic art-centric synthesis.⁵⁶ Either way, though, it is a mobilized and attestive public visibility for which the presence of Beckmesser, representative of that which must be conspicuously absented, is essential. Beckmesser does not join the unanimous concluding chorus. He does not return at all. Instead, we, *qua* German audience (Wilhelmine, Weimar, and Nazi alike) to the opera, see ourselves on stage as the Nürnberg audience to the song-contest learning that patriotism is hard on strangers and strangeness but justifiably, even jubilantly, so. Our collective moral improvement (the traditional ethical goal of comedy if there is one) here requires, indeed is motivated by *Schadenfreude*, the pleasure taken in the humiliation or harm of someone, some category regarded as an instantiation of Vice, and made Other. As Adorno perceptively noted in 1938,⁵⁷ comic techniques figure instrumentally and deceptively in *Die Meistersinger* to exonerate the violence that will come.

Adding considerably to the pleasure of superiority is the extent to which Beckmesser, who laughed early, not only experiences retribution but has been made to collude in his own conspicuous collapse. It is the brooding ingenuity of the great Sachs to have simultaneously foiled Beckmesser into a "public self-unmasking," as Zaenker (1999:8) puts it, and thereby fomented the renewal of *das Volk*. Just so, muddying moral responsibility, Hitler 'prophesied' and the Nazis characterized WWII as *der jüdische Krieg* (the Jewish War), a self-instigated conflict that would warrant their demise. In the ghettos, *Judenräte* (Jewish councils) and *Ordnungsdienst* (order police) were compelled to mediate between the Jewish ghetto occupants and local Nazi officials and enforce regulations and injunctions including discouraging births and deportation. Similarly, in the extermination camps, selected Jewish inmates were forced to become *Sonderkommando* (special command units), and perform disposing and cleaning roles in relation to their murdered fellow inmates.

Mein Kampf demonstrates that Hitler was a self-absorbed, auto-didactic bibliophile who affirmed what amplified him, carried the national trauma of the war with him constantly,⁵⁸ felt personally and nationally betrayed and mocked,⁵⁹ and as a result had a self-identified

providential destiny⁶⁰ to be a novel and artistic great man who would renew his *Volk* by removing the multiple sources of its humiliation to date, all of which in his view originate with the Jews.⁶¹ Although there will likely always be tensions within the historiography of Nazism between 'intentionalist' and 'structuralist' or 'functionalist' approaches it is incontrovertible that many of the programmatic views and violent emphases articulated by Hitler in *Mein Kampf*,⁶² were, beginning in 1933, concertedly operationalized through state and institutional means against the assiduously cultivated collective perception of the mocking (grinning, laughing, sneering) Jewish Other, and that these views would find their self-fulfilling conclusion in the 'Jewish War' requiring a 'final solution.'

In this paper, I have argued that Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* was a crucial and specific inspiration for Hitler and his goal for Germany through Nazism. It provided a compelling form of 'reactionary modernism' (Herf, 1984), a model of leadership towards the activist 'exception,' and secular legitimatizing of the orientation of the national community around the expulsion of the mocking Jew. *Die Meistersinger* helps to explain why, in short, on January 30th, 1939, in what is perhaps the single most important public speech by Hitler bearing on the future of the Jewish peoples under the Reich, the dynamic of humiliation and humor was central. Affirming the vitality of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and the moral, because natural, necessity for expanding its *Lebensraum*, and the resultant identity of domestic and foreign policy, and following various sarcastic remarks directed at the alleged superiority of the Allied powers, Hitler (2007:1449) declared to the Reichstag:

I have been a prophet very often in my lifetime, and this earned me mostly ridicule [*ausgelacht*]. In the time of my struggle for power, it was primarily the Jewish people who mocked my prophecy that, one day, I would assume leadership of this Germany, of this State, and of the entire Volk, and that I would press for a resolution of the Jewish question, among many other problems. The resounding laughter of the Jews in Germany then may well be stuck in their throats today, I suspect. Once again I will be a prophet: should the international Jewry of finance (*Finanzjudentum*) succeed, both within and beyond Europe, in plunging mankind into yet another world war, then the result will not be a Bolshevization of the earth and the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation (*Vernichtung*) of the Jewish race in Europe.

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¹ In his tome published later in 1933 on the necessity of a nationally organized system of propaganda, intended for elite Nazi readers, Hadamovsky (1954:164) reminded those who thought that the Nazis had a unified national will behind them to heed two realities: "first of all of the percentage figures of the election and the still existing ideologies and, secondly, of the gigantic efforts of the entire government machinery employed in the formation of the national will."

² My translation of the reprinted speech in Streicher (1938: 144).

³ Wagner originally referred to it as such in his prose drafts but subsequently dropped the genre category as his own sense of its scope grew.

⁴ As subsequent footnotes will confirm, there is an abundant scholarly controversy that swirls around this question.

Millington (1991) and Köhler (2000) have led the way. However, Van den Berg (2003) is one of the surprisingly few efforts to take the opera seriously as an intervention within the genre of comedy, and one that manipulates the conventions in order to engage in 'comic discourse.'

⁵ See LeBor and Boyes (2004).

⁶ For Gilbert (1926:46): "To find the spirit of comedy fully and artistically expressed, however, in all of its various degrees from rough and clownish humor to the most delicate sparkling of ironic wit, one must turn to Wagner's *Meistersinger*." See also Lee (2007:23-26).

⁷ The liberal Bernhard Diebold in *der Fall Wagner: Eine Revision*, did so too, characterizing it as a "singing comic and festive celebration of democracy" (1928:46, quoted in Sheil, 2006:110). Jones (1937:588) defends Wagner, similarly, arguing that he "moves them emotionally, and emotions are democratic, not esoteric." See also Burk (1919). Only after 1945 would Mann acknowledge the oppressive aspects of the opera. On Mann, see Botstein (1987). *Contra* scholarly efforts to cast Wagner's artistic intentions as democratic, he himself laments to his friends on the extent to which modern opera is planned promiscuously "to catch the taste of all three classes of the public" (1892, I:352).

⁸ See Hohendahl (1993). Hans Sachs was both a prolific poet and dramatist and warm adherent of the Protestantism inaugurated by his contemporary Martin Luther. He is credited with some 6000 pieces large and small in various genre, but is especially esteemed for his contributions to the *Fastnachtspiel* (Shrovetide play).

⁹ Wagner notes that "All the irony, all the bitter or humoristic sarcasm which, in a kindred plight, is all that remains to our literary poets to spur them on to work, I first unburdened in" the *Flying Dutchman* (1892, I:304). *Die Meistersinger* was originally intended, then, by contrast, as a "refreshing little excursion into the realms of mirth," venting a "cheerful mood" (I:331). Van den Berg (2003) suggests Wagner intends to use irony. I find him wanting to be comedic without doing so.

¹⁰ Given the significance of the classical heritage for Wagner, it is crucial to recognize the parallel he drew here: "hand-in-hand with the dissolution of the Athenian State, marched the downfall of Tragedy. As the spirit of *Community* split itself along a thousand lines of egoistic cleavage, so was the great united work of Tragedy disintegrated into its individual factors. Above the ruins of tragic art was heard the cry of the mad laughter of Aristophanes, the maker of comedies" (1892, I.35; see also 136). Cosima Wagner (1978: 956) offers corroboration, noting, after one of the many readings of an Aristophanes play with Richard, this one on 4 April, 1877, "How sublimely the downfall of this most talented people is reflected in the humor of their deeply discerning dramatist [Aristophanes]."

¹¹ See Warrack (1994:1-37).

¹² See Orel and Strunk (1933).

¹³ In defending Wagner's art, Valet (1993:223) protests against amassing selected quotes such as these, which by "sheer mass will numb our critical faculties and silence our objections" but the point is that such definitively hateful statements, which have been neglected by the abundant hagiographic and compartmentalizing treatments of Wagner, are all the more stunning precisely because of Wagner's avowed universalism and love elsewhere. Someone like Moore (1933), for example, acknowledges superficial similarities but badly wants to distinguish Nazism from Wagnerism, and makes no mention of anti-Semitism on either side.

¹⁴ Given that in appearance he is an "unpleasant freak of Nature [*unangenehmen Naturspieles vorübergehend*]" (1894 [1869]:83 [13]), the prospect of representing the Jew in art is inconceivable to Wagner.

¹⁵ See Millington (1991, 1996), Rose (1992). Cf. Katz (1986:49, 62, 76f), apologetically, suggests that the re-publication "was meant to make clear to Wagner's adherents the origin of the otherwise inexplicable opposition to his art" (66), and in anticipation of negative press on *Die Meistersinger* which did not materialize. See the review of Katz by Botstein (1987).

¹⁶ As Nietzsche (1983:221), with *Die Meistersinger* on his mind, observes: for Wagner "Mockery and contradiction by the world around it [art] are a goad and stimulus."

¹⁷ In his parallel prose discussion in 1851 of the archetypal figure of Ahasuerus, 'the wandering Jew,' Wagner speaks of "that wanderer doomed to a long-since outlived life, without an aim, without joy" for whom "death was the sole remaining goal of all his strivings; his only hope, the laying-down of being" (1892, I:307).

¹⁸ As is well known, Richard and Cosima Wagner saw themselves engaged in cultural guerilla warfare, noting Jewish involvement in negative hissing audience receptions and critical reviews of his work, including if not especially *Die Meistersinger*. The dynamics of the 1869 Afterword to *Judaism* are echoed abundantly in Cosima's diaries (1978-80: 44, 120, 154, 206, 210, 215, 285, 445). The entry for March 14, 1870 (199), for example, notes the adverse reaction by Jews to what they take to be the ridiculing of an "old Jewish song" in Beckmesser's song, and Richard's outrage that they dared to react so in the imperial theater. Elsewhere (e.g. 609), Richard expresses his amusement at the importance of *Judaism in Music* to the struggle against Jewish emancipation.

¹⁹ See McFarland (1983), and Hohendahl (1993).

²⁰ I use the translation by Frederic Jameson (Wagner, 1983), together with Henderson (1912). Both provide the German and English in tandem but the latter also provides the stage-directions from the vocal score in German.

²¹ Wagner gives Walther (and thereby the opera's audience) at least three separate opportunities to become literally well-versed.

²² In *Das Judenthum*, for example, Wagner observes that “The first thing that strikes our ear as quite outlandish and unpleasant, in the Jew’s production of the voice-sounds, is a creaking, squeaking, buzzing snuffle [*ein zischender, schrillender, summsender und murksender Lautausdruck*] ...” which when compounded with misused words and phrases results in a mode of speaking that is “an intolerably jumbled blabber [*eines unerträglich verwirrten Geplappers*]” (85 [15]). Moreover, Jews are lethargic and avoid direct confrontation and only get excited where egoist material interest is at stake, and when they do their speech “always gives to such excitement a tinge of the ridiculous [*immer den Character des Lächerlichen giebt*]” (85 [15]).

²³ See especially Millington (1991, 2006) who also suggests a parody of the Jewish cantorial style, here, for which *Das Judenthum* provides textual warrant. Adorno (1981:23) overstates, though not by much, in claiming “that all the rejects of Wagner’s works are caricatures of Jews,” although at least the dwarf character of Mime also clearly conforms to Wagner’s anti-Semitic type. In addition, Weiner (1995) argues, persuasively in my view, that Wagner’s music provides an anti-Semitic “associative code system” (p. 27). Levin (1996) suggests that Wagner’s anti-Semitism is fundamentally aesthetic and note merely political or biographical. However, for a time during the composition of the libretto, the Beckmesser character was named Hanslich, referring to Eduard Hanslick, the Viennese music critic, of Jewish descent, who was sometimes critical of Wagner. Grey (2003) regards this antagonism as central. Cf. Vaget (1993, 2001, 2003) among many who strenuously object to the association of Beckmesser with Jews. See also Blanning (2000:493) for whom what unites Wagner’s villains is not their Jewishness but the fact that they chase power and lack the capacity to love.

²⁴ As Gilbert (1926:49) explains “Witness the awkward and unusual succession of intervals in certain phases; the grotesque and unbeautiful abuse of the fourth; the pauses upon most unexpected notes; the ridiculously out-of-joint; and lastly the stilted, haphazard, hit-or-miss accompaniment on the lute.... All this produces in the musical mind a delicious sense of the ridiculous. We are conscious of all sorts of musical incongruities and are shocked just enough thereby to set our sense of the ludicrous going. But the scene is also very funny” Barry (1880-81) finds: “some ridiculous words to an equally ridiculous and ludicrously florid tune.” Corder (1882:67) finds that “*Beckmesser’s* sere-nade is a piece of farcical nonsense; the rods are made to go as wrongly as possible to the music, and the tune, involving as far as possible nothing but the open notes of a guitar or lute, is preposterous.” On the other hand, Weismann (1925: 144-5) maintains: “Wit he (Wagner) did not possess. When he strove for it, as in the Beckmesser scenes of *Die Meistersinger*, we find the weakest points in this masterwork. For the humor of the *Meistersinger*, developed from a broad view of life, is out of harmony with, let us say, the kind of wit that springs from an intentionally false accentuation of syllables. That is artificial wit.”

²⁵ This violent farcical scene was apparently the original core idea for the opera, and one drawn from Wagner’s personal experience participating in the beating of an inept musician. See Matthews (1983:11), Warrack (1994:2).

²⁶ See Warrack (1994: 66-82).

²⁷ According to Schopenhauer’s dream-theory this sort of dream enables the unconscious deep apprehension of reality to reach the conscious mind.

²⁸ Vaget (1993:228) agrees. Cf. Other sympathetic readers, such as Matthews (1983:14) and Warrack (1994:77f), wrongly in my view, seem to see Sachs referring to himself as the glow-worm.

²⁹ There is a tendency to miss the extent to which Beckmesser reveals his decrepit motivations through his words, in characterizing them as merely “sheer nonsense”, as Corder (1882:70) does for example. Cf. Levin (1996:139, n.34), who also notes (143, n.39) that the Marker-Beckmesser’s ridiculous singing causes both indignation and amusement resulting in laughter persists across Wagner’s prose drafts of *Die Meistersinger*. See also Zaenker (1999).

³⁰ Williams (2004), in his study of the hero-figure in Wagner’s *corpus*, regards Walther as the closest Wagner comes to a messianic hero.

³¹ See Van den Berg (2003).

³² According to Kubizek (2006), the youthful Hitler was preoccupied with Wagner and would read and recite not only the operas but the prose works and published letters. Hitler’s personal piano player from 1922 until 1933, Hanfstaengl (1994:21) claims: “I was the only man who could hammer out Tristan and the Meistersinger to his satisfaction on the piano,” and reports that (50): “Over the course of time I taught him to appreciate the Italian operas, but in the end it always had to be Wagner, *Meistersinger*, *Tristan and Isolde* and *Lohengrin*. I must have played them hundreds of times and he never grew tired of them. He had a genuine knowledge and appreciation of Wagner’s music, and this he had picked up somewhere, probably in his Vienna days, ... wherever it was, it had become part of Hitler’s being.” Indeed, according to Hanfstaengl Hitler was often taken with Wagner: variously, entranced by a visit to Wagner’s study in Bayreuth (63), whistling or humming (65), doodling scenes (145), gurgling with delight at (180), and beating time to (240) one or other of Wagner’s operas. Speer confirms Hitler’s preoccupation with “only Wagner, march music, and operetta” (Fest, 2007:44). Lüdecke (1937: 95) does so too: “Putzi [Hanfstaengl] played Wagner beautifully, and Hitler, who loved music, ranked Wagner among the demigods.” The general influence of Wagner upon Hitler was argued already at length in 1939 by Viereck (1939), and very briefly by Jacobs (1941).

³³ Hanfstaengl (1994:50) suggests as much: “I came to see that there was a direct parallel between the construction of the *Meistersinger* prelude and that of his [Hitler’s] speeches. The whole interleaving of *leitmotifs*, of embellishments, of

counter-point and musical contrasts and argument, were exactly mirrored in the pattern of his speeches, which were symphonic in construction and ended with a great climax, like the blare of Wagner's trombones."

³⁴ See Sheil (2006) on the Weimar Wagner reception and ideological readings of *Die Meistersinger*. See McClatchie (2007) for a discussion of the Nazi appropriation of Wagner in general in these terms, and for the ways in which their use of *Die Meistersinger* in particular was "paradigmatic" (191).

³⁵ Wagner's operas were so important to Hitler that Germany's leading *heldentenor*, and in a sense Wagner's mastersinger, who peerlessly performed Tristan, Siegfried, and Walther, Max Lorenz, though openly homosexual with an obliging Jewish wife, flourished under the protection of Hitler and Göring.

³⁶ That this opera was appropriated and invoked by Hitler and the Nazis is well demonstrated by Köhler (2000), who however goes too far in seeming to blame Wagner for Hitler *in toto*, and Dennis (2003). See also McClatchie (2007:191ff) who regards *Die Meistersinger* as "paradigmatic." It is stressed by some, wishing to defend Wagner's art, that neither Hitler nor any of the Nazi elite ever expressly invoke Wagner — or *Die Meistersinger* specifically — to justify anti-Semitism. Dennis (2003) charts the ready and extensive Nazi nationalistic and culturally conservative appropriation of the opera, the focus on Sachs at the expense of the potentially modernist Walther, but also the striking absence in Weimar and Nazi public discourse of specific references to Beckmesser as Jewish. Similarly, Grey (2003) finds no evidence of this identification either among Wagner's serious critics or subsequent parodists, leading him to suggest that it remained for Wagner a "private subtext" only made explicit in his prose texts (188). Vaget (2001:673-4) even speculates: "Hitler may also have sensed that Wagner's anti-Semitic pronouncements — appalling as they sound to us — were tied to a vague metapolitical and transracial utopian agenda that made them too slippery for ideological comfort." Vague indeed! I would argue instead that both this taciturnity, like Hitler's ban on the singing of the *DeutschlandLied* at the end of the performance stemmed from his view (and Wagner's, and for that matter Mann's in 1933) that great art, art of romantic and reverential purity, because it embodied the eternal remained above the merely historical incidents and accidents of the moment, including even Nazism. Being explicit would also have reduced the considerable pleasures of reverence and recognition of the relevance to the Nazi context. As Millington (1996:7) reminds, "allegories, as Wagner was well aware, are all the more powerful for not being spelt out." See also Groos (1992).

³⁷ Lüdecke (1937:237), commenting on the post-Putsch Nazi electoral efforts notes: "The case was not unlike that in *Die Meistersinger*, where the hero, having once failed to wed the maid, decides to win her according to the rules."

³⁸ Of a relaxed gathering on January 1, 1933, just days before the Nazi regime would begin, Hanfstaengl (1994:195) observed: "The conversation kept coming back to the *Meistersinger* we had seen. It was probably Hitler's favourite opera and he was, of course, a completely Wagnerian figure himself. It would take three or four of the characters to make up his. There was a lot of Lohengrin, with its German connotations of impotence, something of the Flying Dutchman and a mixture of Hans Sachs and Walter von Stolzing. I could not help thinking, while he talked, of the Hans Sachs line about: 'ein Glühwurm fand sein Weibchen nicht, das hat den Schaden angericht [a glow-worm did not find his mate and that was the cause of all the trouble]'. Hitler never did find his mate. Eva Braun was no answer to the problem."

³⁹ Chamberlain's 1896 biography of Wagner and exposition in *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899, 24 editions by 1938) reconciled a hagiographic treatment of Wagner with a historiography of Teutonic ascendancy and artistic agency in organic and binary terms. On which, see Allen (2006). Lüdecke (1937:191): "If Nazism were a religion, then we would need to search no further than Richard Wagner's vast operatic creations to find our liturgical music. It is Nordic to the last flute-note. And not simply because the great cycle deals with Teutonic gods and heroes, let me hasten to add.... The language of his music itself, the sheer tonal revelation of his inherited racial consciousness, is Nordic." Goebbels and Alfred Lorenz also shared Hitler's enthusiasm. Alfred Rosenberg was the lone prominent Nazi anti-Wagnerian. Lüdecke (1937:790) closes, likening Hitler to Wagner himself. Haffner (2008:10) claims that Hitler "yearns for the life of a hero out of opera," and assigns him three motives: personal power, resentment-revenge, and "the staging of scenes out of Wagner's operas and the posing of pictures after Makart with Adolf Hitler as chief protagonist" (19).

⁴⁰ My translation of speech reprinted in Streicher (1938: 144). Streicher (1938:147) invoked the name of Hans Sachs again on 27 April, at the first sitting of the City Council in Nürnberg.

⁴¹ As Marvin (2003) argues, through close scrutiny of the rules and the song performances.

⁴² Cosima Wagner (1978:747), entry for 1 April, 1874. In March 16, 1873, of the opera (608-9), she records that *Die Meistersinger* was "the most optimistic of my works," says R, "This is the form in which I visualized Germans in their true character, their best light, with a popular poet like Hans Sachs, an enthusiastic youth who, though not a mastersinger, feels poetically, and a respectable pedant. This is their level in life; everything else, elegance, for instance, is affectation; but their feelings are of the highest." Nietzsche (1983:232-3), who in the late 1860s preferred it above all of Wagner's other operas to date, mostly concurred, speaking of *Die Meistersinger* as art through which "that uniquely German cheerfulness exhibited by Luther, Beethoven and Wagner can grow, a kind of cheerfulness which other nations completely fail to understand and which contemporary Germans themselves appear to have lost — that golden, thoroughly fermented mixture of simplicity, the penetrating glance of love, reflective mind and roguishness such as Wagner has dispensed as the most delicious of draughts to all who have suffered profoundly from life and return to it

as it were with the smile of convalescents." In *Beyond Good and Evil* (VIII.240) having just witnessed the opera again, Nietzsche finds it classical and futurist but devoid of the present — , and distinctively German in this regard.

⁴³ One can agree with Wagner's defenders here though not on their dehistoricizing. Barry (1881) regarded the opera, its thesis "that art is progressive" (91), and Wagner himself, in similarly high regard. Lee (2007) characterizes it as a superlative, moving, and autobiographical "hymn to music" (5), one that fulfils the terms of the master-song while also overreaching its constraints, displays a "warm humanity" (36), and advances the creed, which he attributes to Wagner, that great art comes from innovation within tradition, and saves and renews the community through "renunciation and compassion" (35), and, like all of his operas, "redemption" (57).

⁴⁴ See McFarland (1983), Botstein (1987). Cf. Rose's (1992) characterization of Wagner as an exponent of 'German Revolutionism' goes a bit too far.

⁴⁵ Again Nietzsche (1983:206) is acute: "will the *Meistersinger* not speak of the German nature to all future ages — more, will it not constitute one of the ripest fruits of that nature, which always seeks reformation not revolution, and though broadly content with itself has not forgotten that noblest expression of discontent, the innovative deed?" It offers a tale of redemption through "the new beneficent genius" (252).

⁴⁶ In *The Art-Work of the Future*, Wagner (1892:145) emphasizes that great art must encounter and elevate *Öffentlichkeit*, by which he means variously the judgment of the public, publicity, and the public aspect.

⁴⁷ One might want to maintain, with Barry (1880-81:91) that "the moral sought to be conveyed is this: that art is progressive, and that rules are useful, and are only to be broken by those who have learned to observe them." However, as even sympathetic Warrack (1994:36) puts it, "It can hardly be denied that there is a degree of moral sophistry here." Sachs is meant to be seen as a master at pious fraud.

⁴⁸ See McElligott (2009).

⁴⁹ See Millington (1991), Levin (1996).

⁵⁰ In *Das Judenthum*, Wagner observes early that the materially dominant Jew is "very much amused [*zwar sehr wohl unterhielten*], no doubt" by the liberal battles about abstract and aerial freedoms (81 [11]), and notes later, on the difficulties of German artistic resistance: "For this, one needed *means*; but the German musician is poor: who's going to help him? Certainly not a disputation and debate about art-interests, which can have no sense amid a crowd, and easily may lead to ridicule [*hierzu gehörten Mittel; der deutsche Musiker ist aber arm: wer wird ihm helfen? Gewiß nicht das Reden und Disputiren über Kunstinteressen, welches unter Vielen nie einen Sinn haben kann, und leicht zum Lächerlichen führt*]" (119 [53]). In fact, Wagner's operas were parodied. For example, the Viennese playwright Johann Nestroy wrote an operatta parody of *Tannhäuser* just two years after the original debuted. Wagner himself was caricatured in cartoons, notably by the French caricaturist, André Gil, and the Viennese caricaturist, Karl Clic, who alluded to Wagner's alleged Jewish ancestry.

⁵¹ In the 1869 Afterword to *Das Judenthum*, Wagner interrupts his defensive narrative to note: "Through its ridiculous aspects this portion of my story has almost betrayed me into a jesting tone, which I must give up, however, if I am to permit myself, respected lady, to finally draw your attention to its very earnest side; and this, in your eyes, will probably commence exactly where we look away from my persecuted person, and take in eye the effects of that singular persecution upon the spirit of our Art itself [*Durch die lächerlichen Seiten der Sache bin ich bei dieser Mittheilung jetzt fast in einen scherzhaften Ton verfallen, den ich nun aber aufgeben muß, wenn ich es mir gestatten will, Sie, verehrte Frau, schließlich noch auf die sehr ernste Seite derselben aufmerksam zu machen: und diese beginnt auch vielleicht für Sie genau da, wo wir von meiner verfolgten Person absehen, um die Wirkung jener merkwürdigen Verfolgung, so weit sie sich auf unsren Kunstgeist selbst erstreckt, in das Auge zu fassen*]" (110 [43]).

⁵² In 1850, Wagner noted that, fortunately, there were few Jewish stage-actors. To the 1869 republication Wagner added at this point a long footnote, lamenting the increasing presence of Jews on stage, and the resulting loss of poetic figures and the falsification of German art "[*Fälschung unsrer Kunst*]" ([14]), as if "the Savior had been cut out from a painting of the crucifix, and a demagogic Jew [*ein demagogischer Jude*] stuck-in instead" (83 [14]).

⁵³ Though the trajectory of any Jewish composer comes close: "Under the burden of this self-deception, which may not be so toilsome as one might think, he, too, appears to us wellnigh in a tragic light: yet the purely personal element of wounded vanity turns the thing into a tragic-comedy, just as in general the un-inspiring, the truly laughable, is the characteristic mark whereby this famed composer shews his Jewhood in his music [*Unter dem Drucke dieser Selbsttäuschung, welche nicht so mühelos sein mag, als man denken könnte, erscheint er uns fast gleichfalls in einem tragischen Lichte: das rein Persönliche in dem gekränkten Interesse macht die Erscheinung aber zu einer tragikomischen, wie überhaupt das Kaltlassende wirklich Lächerliche, das Bezeichnende des Judenthums für diejenige Kundgebung desselben ist, in welcher der berühmte Componist sich uns in Bezug auf die Musik zeigt*]" (98-99 [29]).

⁵⁴ See for example, Levin (1996:140f).

⁵⁵ Love was certainly central to Wagner's understanding of "the spirit of Music" as well as his own motivations and "art-receptive faculty" (1892, I:306; see also 323). On the other hand, Wagner's own synopsis of the original narrative of *Die Meistersinger* as he then envisioned it is structured around the Marker's plucking of the knight, and humiliation of Sachs, the subsequent laughter and deceit by Sachs, and the eventual decisive coming to grief of the Marker (I:330-31). Nietzsche (1983: 215f) concurs on the centrality in Wagner, *qua* dithyrambic dramatist, of a lovingly selfless mo-

tive though also noting his countervailing impulse to “exuberant mockery” (225).

⁵⁶ For Parker (1911:91) “It was the humanity of Wagner which gave us ‘Die Meistersinger,’ and technically great as that work is in a hundred ways, it is yet infinitely greater in its human impulses. Here his [Wagner’s] own laughter ... is heard in every page of the score, and it is a ... laughter more kindly to human hearts than the waggish chuckle of the incorrigible Till of Brunswick. The work overflows with the infectious *gemütlichkeit* of the homely Hans Sachs.” Peterson-Berger (1921:51), influenced by Chamberlain, finds that “Not one of Wagner’s works is better suited to that stage [Bayreuth] than this happy, sunshiny comedy with its mild, conciliatory philosophy of life, its humor and its triumphant music, giving as a whole a lightly sketched but fairly historical picture of German temperament, German feeling and culture.” Orel (1933) affirms the Vienna-inspired “joyous realities and warm, life-like humor of *the Mastersingers*.” For Matthews (1983:14), “*The Mastersingers* is a comedy in the sense that it invites us to contemplate and laugh at the absurdities of human existence, but to do so on the basis of a profound love.” Veget (1993:228) maintains that “In the end, after he [Beckmesser] has made a fool of himself, he is, to be sure, laughed off the stage. But he is not driven out of town. His future is left open; there is no reason to think that he will not maintain his position as town clerk.” Warrack (1994:90) ventures to call it a new genre of “noble comedy.” The opera leaves Lee (2007:54) “proud to the point of cheering that humankind can triumph over madness and produce out of its sorrows great, laughing works of art.” Lee, while allowing that Beckmesser occupies a devil/dragon function, maintains that he is “likable even in his spite” (70), although just how is left unclear, and insists that the maltreatment of such a character is required by the comic genres in play. See also Borchmeyer (1991: 272, 404-10) and Veget (1993, 2003) for the defensive argument that *Die Meistersinger* qua instantiation of the comedy genre is necessarily apolitical, and as such, independent of Wagner’s prose works.

⁵⁷ In his discussion of the cruelty of “Wagner’s sense of humour,” Adorno (1991: 21) argues that “It is not simply that the poor devil [Beckmesser] is ridiculed; in the excitement caused by the laughter at his expense the memory of the injustice that he has suffered is obliterated. The use of laughter to suspend justice is debased into a charter for injustice.” He continues: “Wagner’s music, too, is a worthy lad that treats the villains in like manner, and the comedy of their suffering not only gives pleasure to whoever inflicts it; it also stifles any questions about its justification and tacitly presents itself as the ultimate authority.” Actually, Grierson (1913: 22) had already argued that “The lack of humour was Wagner’s greatest defect. No man with a sense of humour could have written *Parsifal*. He could be vehement and sarcastic, pathetic and sentimental, but he was a stranger to wit and humour.” Similarly, “The humour in the *Meistersinger* resembles bombast compared with that in *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and nowhere in Wagner is there anything comparable with the sparkling and suave humour in Verdi’s *Falstaff*. And it is just this lack of humour in Wagner that the public cannot realise” (23). Grierson maintained that the net effect of Wagner — so much nature, melodrama, mysticism, heaving musical tone-waves and “violence in the sphere of the imagination” (24) — moving yet without a moral basis for action was demoralisation and, as such, deadly. Van den Berg (2003) dubs this the ‘(mal)function’ of Wagnerian laughter.

⁵⁸ Hitler wrote furiously in *Mein Kampf*: “Now all had been in vain. In vain all the sacrifices and deprivations, in vain the hunger and thirst of endless months, in vain the hours during which, gripped by the fear of death, we nevertheless did our duty, and in vain the death of two millions who died thereby [*Es war also alles umsonst gewesen. Umsonst all die Opfer und Entbehrungen, umsonst der Hunger und Durst von manchmal endlosen Monaten, vergeblich die Stunden, in denen wir, von Todesangst umkrallt, dennoch unsere Pflicht taten, und vergeblich der Tod von zwei Millionen, die dabei starben*]” (267 [223-224]).

⁵⁹ It was not merely that so many had suffered and died in vain but that, in Hitler’s view in *Mein Kampf*, the Weimar regime “so mockingly cheated them of the highest sacrifice which in this world man is able to bring to his people [*die sie um das höchste Opfer, das auf dieser Welt der Mann seinem Volke zu bringen vermag, so hohnvoll betrogen hatte*]” (261 [224]).

⁶⁰ According to Speer (1997:232), “Hitler’s technical horizon, however, just like his general ideas, his views on art, and his style of life, was limited by the First World War.”

⁶¹ For Hitler the “ultimate and decisive cause” of the war was neglect of race and the “Jewish danger” (451 [359]).

⁶² Beginning in 1933 it would circulate in three distinct editions: the *Volksausgabe* or People’s Edition, the *Hochzeitsausgabe* or Wedding Edition, given free at local municipal charge to marrying Aryan couples, and beginning in 1940, the *Tornister-Ausgabe*, a compact but complete version to be sent to soldiers at the front). Over a quarter of a million copies had been sold when Hitler came to power in 1933. Over 5 million copies were sold by 1939, and some 10 million by 1943. See Mieder (1997:14). Lawson recalls that “It was on the obligatory gift list for every celebration, replacing all the fine gold watches and other precious souvenirs that had previously been awarded. Every school library and household was required to have it, and by 1939, it was in its 41st printing. It was Germany’s most printed, but least read book” (Lawson, 1999:216). Even Hitler’s devoted valet, Linge (2009:25-6) claims not to have read it until 10 years after WWII.

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THE ART OF SURVIVAL

ART AS A RESPONSE TO THE HOLOCAUST

■
BY MOLLY POWERS

*As my pendulum swings and swings,
I will speak for those who cannot speak,
sing for those who cannot sing,
and live for those who could not live.*

- Judith Goldstein, artist

California artist Mina Cohen states that as the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, she has felt shaped by those events in every aspect of her life. As a result of her mother's experiences, Cohen has created a series of works based upon her mother's life and stories, in order that future generations might learn from past mistakes and prevent its reoccurrence. Although she did not personally experience the Holocaust herself, Cohen feels a duty to continue relating the stories of the Holocaust. She states that, "Each person has the responsibility to respect the humanity of every other person with whom they come into contact. If we strive for that, our mission will be fulfilled" (1).

Cohen represents part of the large movement of artists who have chosen to create art as a response to the Holocaust. Four primary visual responses have developed as a reaction to this tragedy. The first response is created by survivors who prefer to express their experiences in a concrete manner, often by drawing or painting memories of camps, other prisoners or lost family members. There are also those survivors who convey their experiences more abstractly, expressing confusion and terror through metaphoric paintings and art. Finally, there are those who have not experienced the Holocaust directly, but have been affected either by the ordeals of a family member or through learning and decide to create art as a response. This final category is further divided by those who create art based upon the memories of survivors, and those who create art based on their own reading and research.

There has been recent discussion concerning the value of these non-survivor works, specifically whether those who did not directly experience the Holocaust have a right to be creating art that represents it. However, these artists argue that the purpose of creating a visual reminder of the Holocaust is to encourage remembrance and discourage repetition. By chronicling events and feelings inspired by the Holocaust, whether at the hand of a survivor or one who is simply moved to speak out, art created in response to the Holocaust does just that.

This paper will examine various visual artists who have created work in response to the Holocaust, specifically focusing on artists from the United States and those who settled in the United States after liberation. It will also discuss the issues associated with creating post-Holocaust artwork and the controversy that surrounds survivor versus non-survivor artwork.

While some believe that art created in response to the Holocaust should always be accepted and encouraged for its themes of remembrance, others feel that those who did not personally experience the Holocaust do not have the right to claim a connection with the events since they are not truly able to understand the events that occurred.

Holocaust art often arises as a means of translating conflicting feelings or relating experiences. Depictions of the Holocaust are not necessarily depictions of horror, although some of the images associated with Holocaust art are horrific. Rather, the images can act as a cataloguing of events or a way to make sense of nonsensical actions. Experiencing or learning about the loss of so many lives can be overwhelming when one is unable to make sense of the reasons behind the atrocities. By translating this confusion into a visual sphere, artists are able to express their confusion or tell their stories. In the book *Last Traces: the Lost Art of Auschwitz*, author Joseph Czarnecki writes “One of art’s basic functions is to be a witness to life, to depict how life was at a specific time and place” (13). In his memoir *Painted in Words*, artist Samuel Bak writes “Why paint? I realized that I had a special story to tell. There was a past that had been lying dormant in me. Indeed, my abstract canvases were letting it emerge ... Now this past that was stirring and searching for expression made me ask myself how to let it speak” (478).

Many artists are hesitant to exhibit or even create their works, believing that today’s generations do not want to hear the stories of the Holocaust. Ernst Van Alphen, author of *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory*, writes “I was bored to death by all the stories and images of the war, which were held out to me ‘officially’ as moral warnings” (2). Samuel Bak states “Being a survivor, I was familiar with the world’s reluctance to listen to our harrowing stories” (480). However, Van Alphen goes on to articulate that this resistance occurs when the Holocaust is taught in such a way that the student is unable to form his or her own thoughts and reactions to the atrocities that occurred; one’s response then becomes almost “culturally programmed” (Van Alphen 3). With the use of visual art, the artist is able to better capture an emotional dynamic within a person that is often lacking in a textbook or second-hand factual account.

The interpretation of memories is one of the most vivid insights the modern world has into the horrors of the Holocaust. Although many artists created their works while in the camps and ghettos, other survivors depicted their memories after liberation in order to come to terms with their experiences. One such artist is Fritz Hirschberger. Born in Dresden in Germany, Hirschberger fought for several armies against invading Nazis and was imprisoned in a Gulag before being sent by the Polish army to Palestine and North Africa. After the war he settled in the United States. Hirschberger began painting primarily as a response to what he felt was a growing epidemic of indifference to the tragedies of the Holocaust. He did not begin painting his memories of the Holocaust until 1985; thirty years after his personal experiences. Hirschberger’s paintings were primarily inspired by the vast amount of numbers used when speaking about the Holocaust. Hirschberger’s goal was to reduce that number in his paintings by depicting individuals rather than masses. He stated,

However most of the writings, documentaries and paintings were only descriptions of the Holocaust, only a few succeeded to convey the gist of the Holocaust. Consequently I concluded, that to try to explain the unexplainable, I had to translate each deed of horror from the general to the personal by isolating the incidents — by reducing the astronomical numbers to ‘One’ (Hirschberger 3).

Although Hirschberger’s work asks questions, it provides no answers. The stark paintings instead provide remembrance and ask the viewer to provide answers to why the Holocaust occurred. For example, in his famous series titled “Indifference,” the artist questions the actions of Christians and the church during the events of the Holocaust, and causes viewers to examine their own actions if such events were to occur again. Hirschberger passed away in January of 2008.

Like Hirschberger, Kitty Klaidman also depicted her Holocaust experiences after they had transpired. Klaidman had no experience in any concentration camps, but instead was a “hidden child,” and spent the war concealed first in the home of a local Christian, and then in the attic of a farmhouse. After the war she moved to Washington and began creating a series of paintings based upon her years in hiding. Klaidman’s art conveys the small, cramped space that was her home for two years, and also recalls the long periods of fear and anxiety she felt during that time. Although most of the imagery is dark, Klaidman introduces a seemingly paradoxical shaft of light, which she states represents “the remarkable fact that my immediate family survived intact. What it surely represents, however, is that the existence of people like Jan Velicky, the man most responsible for saving us, serves as a beacon of hope in the most desperate times” (1). The paintings have allowed Klaidman to come to terms with her fear of the enclosed spaces and she writes that “For me, being able to confront these spaces, as they are now and as I remember them, made me realize the extent to which I have already made peace with my past” (1). By depicting memories in a concrete manner, both Hirschberger and Klaidman are able to confront their respective pasts while ensuring that past is not forgotten.

In addition to producing art that literally recalls memories, survivors also create abstract works that relate feelings rather than experiences. Perhaps one of the most well-known abstract visual chroniclers of the Holocaust is Vilna-born Samuel Bak. Bak, a child prodigy, painted throughout the war and continued to depict his impressions in surreal landscapes featuring images of broken chess pieces, lost family members and crumbled landscapes of cities after the war. As a survivor of the Holocaust, Bak struggled with the balance of depicting Holocaust themed images and representing overarching themes of the human condition. In writing about his work for the Jewish Heritage Online Magazine, Bak states,

Yet although I resisted making the connection explicit, these were questions that for me, personally, returned always to the experience of the Holocaust. Chimneys, sprouting heavy smoke and made of clusters of stones that reminded me of cemeteries, had already been hiding in my earlier paintings. Yet I still named such paintings Ancient Industries, hoping that no one would guess what they meant to me (1).

Bak’s work, like Fritz Hirschberger’s, often poses questions rather than answers, and much of

his work represents a world without explanation. As a child experiencing the horrors of the Holocaust, Bak was able to use art in order to capture his questions in a visual manner. Although the answers to these questions are still unanswerable, Bak continues to revisit his past and search for, if not an explanation, then for healing and clarity. He writes in his memoir "I decided to let my paintings tell me what to do, to let my story (or was it their story?) come without forcing ... Mine was a story that of a humanity that had survived two great wars and whose world now lay in shambles. Now, is emergence could be seen as a sign of resilience," (479).

Like Samuel Bak, Judith Goldstein also uses the abstract to attempt to make sense of the Holocaust. Also born in Vilna, Goldstein is a survivor of Buchenwald; she moved to New York after her experiences and uses collages to express her memories of events. Goldstein states that she began creating art primarily as a way to make sense of her childhood traumas. She writes "The arts have the power to transport experiences from one time to another or one place to another. It affects the architecture of my emotions, forces imagination, and helps me create a fusion of beauty and sadness. When I paint my invisible witnesses help me reconstruct scenes I was a part of" (8). Goldstein often uses bright colors and a certain almost naïve style to portray extremely serious events. She states, "My approach is sometimes disarming, as the power of the subject can be in conflict with the apparent lightness of the medium and color" (8). Goldstein has also written several songs about her experiences. She states that, "There [referring to Torun, Poland], I went through the tunnel of death, but survived by many miracles ... I am able to turn my experiences of horror and degradation into artworks" (1).

Art that is created by survivors of the Holocaust often takes years to become a reality. Many survivors are hesitant to relive their experiences, even if that experience is only on paper. Often, the visual reminder of endured horrors can be as painful as the original experiences and survivors have stated that the events can take thirty to forty years to process. Some choose never to express themselves visually at all, preferring to relate their memories to those who will record their stories for them.

Although Robert Sutz did not personally experience the events of the Holocaust, he creates Holocaust-themed works in order to provide remembrance. Sutz's preferred medium is plaster; he has created life-masks of Holocaust survivors, mainly in the Chicago area. Sutz writes,

After making life masks for over 50 years, I found a procedure that seems right for me. My subjects sit upright in a comfortable chair, breathe normally, and can keep their eyes open. I lubricate the face and hair, and apply a mold-making material (usually plaster bandages). I work my way around the nostrils and eyes, making it easy for my subjects to breathe, while their eyes can be opened or closed. This procedure usually takes about 45 minutes, before the face mold is removed. After the cast is made, the eyes are carved out and the hair is modified, (2).

Sutz's father's family was lost at Auschwitz, so the artist feels a deep personal connection to the Holocaust. Sutz has declared that his works are to be a legacy for future generations to remember and will not be for sale, but instead will be shown only at gallery exhibitions. In addi-

tion, Sutz has begun creating a series of paintings in response to the testimonies he heard from survivors. These images are extremely graphic, and portray actual events survivors witnessed. In a personal interview, Sutz states, "I want the future generation to be reminded that the Holocaust did happen. Showing masks taken 'from life' and paintings of scenes they witnessed adds another dimension to current Holocaust documentation. Painting disturbing scenes doesn't bother me too much. It just boggles my mind that these horrific events could happen" (Sutz).

Another artist who attempts to keep a record of the Holocaust, although he did not experience them himself, is Jeffrey Wolin. Growing up in the 1950s, Wolin's grandparents were Holocaust survivors, and his grandfather's family was lost in the war, leading Wolin himself to become interested in the subject. He states that,

My grandparents, immigrants from Eastern Europe, would go ballistic whenever talk would turn to Hitler and the Germans... I am fully aware that no one who did not directly experience the Holocaust can truly understand the depths of horror that Jews in Europe experienced at the hands of the Nazis. (1).

Wolin's approach to documenting these events is through the medium of photography. He interviews survivors, and then photographs them in everyday situations and poses. He then imposes a textual history of the subject behind the photo so the story will not be forgotten. Wolin believes that by creating these legacies, he is individualizing the experiences of people, making the events more real to modern audiences.

Works created by artists like Sutz and Wolin are considered testimonial (rather than archival, which deals more with an artist's subjective response to events), since the artist acts more like an impartial camera lens or videotape. Events are simply recorded in order for a memory to be preserved, and often artists are moved to create these works based upon testimonies they have heard, or the experiences of family members. However, there are other artists whose work is based upon the Holocaust but whose art resembles more of an outpouring of emotion, rather than a testimony of witnesses. Artist Larry Rivers was moved to create art based upon the Holocaust after reading the works of Primo Levi and seeing photographs of Nazi cruelty at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In addition to creating works about the Holocaust, Rivers also linked his work to more overarching themes of how memory is made and political questions. Rivers was originally a jazz saxophonist, but turned to art in the 1950s and became one of the forerunners of the pop art movement. He believed that as a Jew, he was moved to create work that reflected more personal feelings. "I decided I was entering my serious period, that I would do something on my people," the artist stated in an interview (Goondale 20).

Seth Kramer also did not personally experience the Holocaust, but visited Poland with a number of Holocaust survivors. Although he had grown up learning about the Holocaust, he stated that it was at that moment he understood the difference between knowing facts and actually understanding events. Upon his return to the United States Kramer set out to express the loss of so many lives in physical terms. He did this by counting six million grains of rice and storing them in jars, allowing him to quantify the vast numbers of people murdered dur-

ing the Holocaust. It took him nearly a year to count out one million grains; not even enough to represent the lives of the children. In his video diary of the project, Kramer states,

I think that my greatest barrier to understanding the Holocaust has always been the numbers of Jews murdered. Six million by the Nazi's own count. The number six million is often used in reference to the Holocaust, but it really is too large a number; it becomes abstracted. To illustrate this point I started to figure out how old I would be if I lived six million hours in a lifetime. People guessed I'd be eighty or ninety years old. Some said I would be over one hundred. In fact if I was to live six million hours in a life time I would live to be well over six hundred years old. So if we cannot comprehend the number six million, can we possibly understand the magnitude of what happened during the Holocaust? (1).

Kramer hoped that his project would inspire people to learn about the Holocaust and answer the question "why Jews try so hard not to forget" (Kramer 1). Kramer's approach is somewhat contradictory to Hirschberger's or Wolin's, who believe in individualizing experiences rather than collectivizing them. Kramer feels that only by viewing victims en masse can any person truly gain a scope of the magnitude of deaths that occurred.

Despite these intentions to educate and prevent further catastrophes, there is controversy over whether those who create their own interpretive works of Holocaust events ought to be allowed to do so. Various art scholars and occasionally survivors state that without personally enduring the Holocaust, an artist cannot properly represent the feelings and events.

Within the two categories of art produced by non-survivors, art that acts as survivor testimonies is generally accepted for its purpose of preserving the history of those who will not live forever. Robert Sutz states "Because the survivors are leaving us every day, I want their likeness to live on, along with their stories" (Sutz). The artist then does not act solely as an individual, but rather as a sounding device for others to tell their stories. He or she effectively disappears and allows the story to take the primary focus. Thus it is arguable that testimonial art is almost interchangeable with art created by survivors (Van Alphen 150).

It is also argued that one of the purposes of non-survivors creating testimonial art is as much for the creator as the viewer. By being a personal survivor, the witness can use testimony as a healing process while the artist can learn from the survivor's experience and transmit those experiences to the rest of the world. Psychoanalyst Dori Laub writes "To a certain extent, the interviewer-listener takes on the responsibility of bearing witness that previously the narrator felt he bore alone, and therefore could not carry out. It is the encounter, and the coming together between the survivor and the listener which makes something like the repossession of the act of witnessing" (in Van Alphen 152). Judith Goldstein adds,

I learned a great deal by attending ... taking part in workshops, verbalizing my thoughts, feelings and share my experiences of the past with others like myself. There are still many perennial questions to our identity that have not been challenged. All survival stories are different, as we were: In hiding, concentrations camps, forests, ghettos, or those who fled from the Nazis to other parts of the world (9).

Without the aid of artists willing to express the stories of survivors, their stories have the possibility of being forgotten.

Although those who create visual testimonies of survivors, effectively acting as ghost-writers, are celebrated for their efforts to maintain memory, it is not so with those who create art purely based upon their own feelings. Some critics feel that artists who create original works based upon the Holocaust are actually dehumanizing events, rather than memorializing them. Ernst Van Alphen writes,

Art that tries to refer to the Holocaust accurately...tends to repeat the Holocaust in its ordering, classifying, objectifying and dehumanizing impulse...it is exactly this disenchanting conclusion that forces us to consider other qualities of art, including historical genres such as testimony, as possible means for rethinking the very purpose of representing the Holocaust (150).

Since an artist may not have been present for the events of the Holocaust, he or she may not be able to capture the emotions behind the atrocities; rendering them effectively meaningless and trivial.

In addition, there is the matter of the art itself. Recent art created to mark the Holocaust by those who are not Holocaust survivors often looks at the quantity of victims, rather than the individual. These artists feel that the world today is unable to relate to or comprehend the number of victims of the Holocaust, and it is only by portraying these vast numbers can modern audiences truly understand the extent of the tragedy. However, many survivors believe that this quantifying of victims does not actually allow for greater understanding, but actually lends to further desensitization to the events. Fritz Hirschberger states "I was horrified by the obsessive use of numbers: the numbers of people killed in each camp, the number of people exterminated by various methods; the numbers of Jewish villages erased" (3). Art created by survivors and those recording the testimonies of survivors seeks to individualize the experiences of those affected by the Holocaust, mainly by portraying individuals in their pictures and work, rather than crowds. They believe that every individual has a unique story to tell, and a right to relate that story to the rest of the world. Art that reflects this individualization is often celebrated for its memory capturing process and those who survive often believe these testimonies to be of the most value, since by preserving the memories of individuals, they will not be forgotten.

There is also controversy surrounding the use of the word "Holocaust" when applied to artwork. There are many artists who have applied the term to other genocides in the recent century, and create art that is based solely upon that term. However, many survivor artists feel that the term "Holocaust" ought to be applied only to the destruction of Jews during World War II, and to use the term for another purpose devalues the actions committed. Fritz Hirschberger stated "As my generation which experienced the Holocaust is fading, artists with no direct links to the Shoah are responding to it, and a growing number of people are applying 'Holocaust language' to current and personal disasters" (Hirschberger 1). This has been seen in artwork referring to the September 11th attacks as well as the genocide in Rwanda, and the

term is also used simply to describe scenes of social injustice. Survivors and artists who produce works that are specifically related to the Jewish Holocaust state that their use of the term is in order to emphasize Jewish particular-ness and memorialize the specific events that occurred during the World War II period. By applying the term to a number of situations, not only are the victims trivialized, but it is also argued that the perpetrators can somehow be exonerated, since their actions become not acts of mass violence, but simply another unfortunate episode in human history (Bak 481-482).

However, there are those who think that art created by non-survivors or those not directly related to the Holocaust should be preferred since personal testimonies (and the recording of those testimonies) can be colored by memory or can become transparent if the memory is sufficiently horrific. Ernst Van Alphen writes, “[it is argued] There is no reason to assume that testimony about the horrific is more unmediated and complete than any other kind of speech” (150). The Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld likewise discounts personal testimony, stating that testimonies operate as acts of repression. The more often a speech is told and external thoughts are woven into a chronological order, the more easily introspection is lost. He states, “The survivor himself was the first, in the weakness of his own hand ... to create the strange plural voice of the memoirist, which is nothing but externalization upon externalization, so that what is within will never be revealed” (Van Alphen 151). Samuel Bak adds “For endless hours I listened to tales of survival, to the interpretation of those tales by other survivors, and to the scrutiny of those interpretations in the intimacy of my newly re-created home. Many years had to pass before I realized that some of the stories were wishful fantasies” (427). By producing art that is separate from a survivor’s narrative voice, an artist is better able to present material in a way that is unfettered by a possibly unreliable narrator.

Artists also use arguments for art justification based upon the very definition of art. If art is said to be an outpouring of emotion that cannot be expressed except in the visual realm, then a person should be able to create any type of art one wishes in order to convey one’s emotion or reaction to a certain event. Each artist who creates art based upon the Holocaust seeks to create art that allows others to learn and remember what occurred. Samuel Bak states,

It often felt as if the overpowering importance of the subject was expected to compensate for the lack of artistic imagination and force. A few decades ago many serious and creative artists refrained from touching the theme of the Holocaust ... Fortunately, this situation has evolved. At present, the challenge of anchoring art in meaningful themes does not scare away talented artists. On the contrary, subject now matters (482).

This idea is also echoed in the concepts of *Tikkun ha-Olam* which is also used to explain the reasons behind artists who are not Holocaust survivors creating Holocaust-themed artworks.

In his memoir, Samuel Bak speaks often of the Jewish concept *Tikkun ha-Olam*. Although the phrase has multiple interpretations, one common connotation is the pursuit of social justice and action in everyday life. The phrase became well-known with the advent of the Zohar, which is a foundational work of mystical Jewish thought known as the Kabbalah. It deals with

mystical aspects of the Torah, cosmogony, and psychology. The term in early times was frequently used to mean “world repair,” “restoration,” and “amendment.” The simple idea of *Tikkun ha-Olam* is that upon the creation of the world, God placed pieces of himself into vessels of light in order to create the world. However, these vessels were broken and the shards became sparks of light trapped within the pieces of God’s creation. In the article “Tikkun ha-Olam: The Metamorphosis of a Concept,” Gilbert Rosenthal writes “The Zohar introduced a startlingly new meaning to the concept of *tikkun*: the actions of humans repair the flaws in the universe” (223).

This idea is often used as a reason for taking social action in Jewish life; as a vessel of divine light one is required to act in a manner that is restorative to society in order to repair the broken pieces of the world. Rosenthal writes, “It has become a synonym for social action, and social groups everywhere consider their program was within the purview of *Tikkun ha-Olam*. It is virtually the equivalent of the struggle for justice and peace, brotherhood and racial equality” (239). This idea of *Tikkun ha-Olam* becomes an essential concept when used as justification for the creation of Holocaust related works. By creating these art pieces, artists often hope to create restoration for those who survived, and to repair the damage that was done by acting as vessels of divine light. It does not matter whether a person experienced the events firsthand, secondhand, or simply read about the events in a textbook. What is important is that an artist created a work that was not only motivated by an emotional response, but also a work that evokes an emotional response in the viewer. Ernst Van Alphen states “We must transmit the dreadful experience from the category of history into that of art” (153).

While there are controversies among the creators of Holocaust art, concern has been raised over whether modern audiences even want to see art based upon the Holocaust. With so many portrayals in literature, film, and poetry, it is often the viewer’s challenge to avoid becoming desensitized, and for artists to portray their works in a way that will have an emotional impact that can reach a society that has been desensitized to mass violence. Even with personal testimonies, it is sometimes believed among survivors that their testimonies do not want to be heard. Samuel Bak writes,

Underneath shimmered a need to speak out, to unload, to tell the most horrendous tales of survival. This was possible only among people who shared similar terms of reference. Only we, the survivors, were able to guarantee the storyteller conditions of total safety. Many people ...chose later, when confronted with the outer world, to shut up. Who would believe them? But we believed” (427).

Despite these fears, artists continue to create works that chronicle their experiences or the experiences of others. Judith Goldstein states, “With great determination, I will hold on to what happened during WWII and will not betray my history for the convenience of others ... I have learned never to be silent about my past. As the past recedes, I need to make sure that the secrets of history are not passively or actively forgotten, distorted, or denied” (7).

Art in response to tragedy may be difficult to produce or exhibit, but artists moved by the violence of the Holocaust feel compelled to create art as remembrance of past events.

Whether this art stems from their own experiences or from those with similar experiences, whether it comes second-hand from witnesses, or from simply an emotional response to actions committed, all artists are united in a common purpose. Jeffrey Wolin writes, "It is my hope that by providing a face with an accompanying story of great power, an audience can empathize with the survivors" (1). Each artist seeks to bring a sense of this empathy, memory and knowledge to their work. Each work of art is a constant visual reminder that the events of the Holocaust will not be forgotten, but instead will be memorialized for the future; for generations to learn and stop future horrors from happening again.

Molly Powers was an undergraduate at California Baptist University when she presented this paper. She received a B.A. in English in 2010. She hopes to go on to get her Master's Degree in American Literature and to eventually teach at the University level.

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SECTION 11
REMEMBERING
THE STORIES AS ENDOWMENT
FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

STIFLING DAILY LIFE
THE EROSION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES OF JEWISH CITIZENS
BY NAZI ADMINISTRATIVE DECREE

■
BY ELOISE ROSENBLATT

Introduction

The focus of this paper is the period of 1933-1938 in Germany, prior to the implementation of the Final Solution which sent Jews to their deaths in concentration camps. Of the Holocaust survivors I have known, this period in their lives as children and teens alternated between normalcy and disruption. This paper attends particularly to the special rules created by the Nazis to harass and isolate Jewish citizens — adults and children — in their daily lives, to punish them for remaining in Germany and to encourage them to leave. As an academic colleague wryly put it, “We were strongly invited not to stay.”

The introduction of this paper will recall a traumatic memory of my academic colleague and distinguish literal memory from exemplary memory. Then, the main part the paper will utilize two primary documentary sources in tandem. The first primary text is the collection of official Nazi decrees published in eight volumes, a set of 2,000 documents translated from German into English.¹ These documents were used as evidence at the Nuremberg trials to show how the war against European countries and genocide of the Jewish population reflected a government-wide conspiracy by the Nazis. The official documents manifested the Nazis' violation of treaties, the oppression of non-combatant citizens, and constituted state-sponsored war-crimes.

The second primary text is the personal interview conducted with two Holocaust survivors, Alfred and Susanne Batzdorff in Santa Rosa in January of 2010.² Without knowing the exact texts of the Nazi decrees at the time, they recalled the impact of these repressive measures on them as children and teens, prior to leaving Germany after *Kristallnacht* in November of 1938. In the period from 1933-1938, these decrees had a major impact on the professional lives of their parents who were physicians. But the decrees also affected their own school life, their social life, and their recreational life as evidenced in sections from this interview.

In the conclusion, some observations will be offered, from the vantage point of a lawyer who considers Constitutional Law, on the need of citizens to maintain the principle of separation of powers in local, state and federal government. The collapse of the separation of powers allowed the Nazis to operate as a totalitarian regime and to render the citizens powerless to intervene or end the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler.

One of my academic colleagues recalled a painful memory from his childhood in Berlin. He was probably, by my calculation, about seven years old. It was about three years into the Nazi regime so the year would have been 1936 or 1937. He had taken a piece of sausage from his house to feed a dog he had befriended a few doors down the street. As he was offering the

bratwurst to the dog, a group of uniformed boys in their teens — *Hitlerjugend* — yelled at him to stop. His Jewish sausage was not fit for the dog to eat, they taunted him with laughs and sneers. They drove the dazed and confused little boy off. He ran back home. Sixty years later, he still recalls this incident. “Your Jewish sausage is not fit for a dog to eat.” (I, the listener, felt the shaming like a sting, a life-long scar to the psyche, even though it had not happened to me.)

This boy was one of the lucky ones to be able to leave Germany in 1938 after *Kristallnacht*. He learned English quickly, went through schools in the United States, served in the military, married, had children, became a noted scholar and professor, an academic administrator, a well-published author, and a philanthropist. He illustrates the resiliency of children who survived the Nazi era. He is one of those children who distinguished themselves in their adult life as persons who achieved socio-economic success, with complex identities assimilated into a new culture.³

The Holocaust consumed the family members he left behind when his father and mother fled. Many years later, in the 1990s, he went back to Berlin to visit the neighborhood where he had grown up and where his father had run the family business. But the building had disappeared, completely flattened. In its place, there was emptiness; it was now nothing but a parking lot.

The title of this conference for which this paper was prepared is *What We Choose to Remember*. Instead of denial, avoidance and leaving painful events an empty space in our memories, we try to imagine and reconsider events that happened. What do we choose to see? Miroslav Volf is director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture and professor of systematic theology at Yale Divinity School. His 2006 book is entitled *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*.⁴

Relying on the work of Tzvetan Todorov, Volf distinguishes two kinds of memory: literal and exemplary. *Literal memory*, Volf claims, is seeking,

[T]o remember in order to construct a plausible narrative of a wrong we have suffered, to understand precisely what happened and why, to comprehend its effects on our lives, to condemn the culprits, and through all these activities to recover psychic or social health and stabilize identity. The primary concern of literal memory is our own well being.⁵

“Your Jewish sausage is not fit for a dog to eat.” Literal memory means the little boy in Berlin, now grown up, and I as the hearer of his story, identify this incident as a wrong. We acknowledge how *Hitlerjugend* bullied Jews, even children, and we comprehend its effect — a permanent scar of shame on the psyche which persists even into adulthood. We condemn the Nazis, and by this literal remembering, the man who was once this boy tries to recover psychic or social health and thereby to stabilize his identity.

(I remember being told of this incident, and I feel the shock that comes with empathy. I seek a way to recover my own well being, as well as hope for my colleague’s recovery of peace, despite this trauma, one of many he experienced as a child.)

Volf, citing Todorov, then describes *exemplary memory*, which “pushes us beyond the concern for our own well being by helping us learn lessons from the past so as to apply them in

new situations." In Todorov's words, "I extract a lesson from it; the past thus becomes a principle of action for the present."⁶

So what literal memories of repressive administrative decrees will lead us to exemplary memory that makes the past a principle of action for the present?

The Administrative Decrees and Their Effect on Daily Life of Jews

As context, 70% of Jews in Germany who fled the country and survived the Holocaust, recall that their personal relations and family's treatment by non-Jews before 1933 were friendly or mostly friendly. By contrast, in the same group, only 10% say that after 1933, non-Jews remained friendly toward them and there was no change. More than half recall that their family's treatment by and relationship to non-Jews after 1933 became hostile and deteriorated.⁷ Thus, it can be concluded that when the Nazis issued official decrees isolating Jews from German citizens, these public announcements had a powerful effect on the emotions of ordinary persons. Decrees against Jews, making them officially disapproved, had the effect of breaking up long friendships and sowing hostility between formerly friendly neighbors. Citizens came to feel as they were told to feel, to adopt a hostility they had not felt before the decree.

A list of main categories of discriminatory decrees against Jews can be found in Volume 1 of *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Most of the citations in this paper come from documents in Volume 4. When the Nazi party took control of the State, the party used official decrees, bypassing the legislature, to deprive Jewish citizens of their rights. Here are some examples from 1933-1938:⁸

- Jewish immigrants were denaturalized (1933)
- Jews were excluded from farming (1933)
- Jews were denied employment by press and radio (1933)
- Jews were denied the right to hold public office or civil service positions (1933)
- Jews were excluded from stock exchanges and stock brokerages (1934)
- Native Jews were precluded from citizenship (1935)⁹
- Jews were forbidden to live in marriage or to have extramarital relations with persons of German blood (1935)
- Jews were denied the right to vote (1936)
- Jews were excluded from business in general and from the economic life in Germany (1938)
- Jews were relegated to an inferior status by the denial of common privileges and freedoms, such as access to certain city areas, sidewalks, transportation, places of amusement, restaurants (1938)
- Jews were denied the practice of law (1938)
- Jews were excluded from the practice of dentistry (1939)
- As early as 1933, raids were conducted on synagogues by uniformed Nazis. Worshippers were assaulted, and arrested; religious artifacts and emblems were torn down.¹⁰

Jews are Not Citizens: Immediate Loss of Their Civil Service Positions

On April 7, 1933 the Law for the Reestablishment of the Professional Civil Service decreed that officials who are of non-Aryan descent are to be retired; holders of honorary offices are to be removed. There was an exception for those who fought in World War I.¹¹

The November 1935 *Reichsgesetzblatt*, the Citizenship Law, Article 4 ordered that “A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He has no right to vote in political affairs, he cannot occupy a public office.”¹² The same November 1935 *Reichsgesetzblatt* announced that Jewish officials will retire as of December 31, 1935.

If these officials served at the front in the World War, either for Germany or her allies, they will receive in full, until they reach the age limit, the pension to which they were entitled according to last received wages; they will, however, not advance in seniority. After reaching the age limit, their pension will be calculated anew, according to the last received salary, on the basis of which their pension was computed.¹³

While this privilege given to veterans seems to have shown the Nazis' respect for those who had fought for Germany in World War I, it was fleeting. Both parents of Susanne Batzdorff were physicians, and the father of Alfred Batzdorff was also a doctor.

As Susanne Batzdorff notes:

My father was a *Frontkämpfer*. That's someone who fought at the front and therefore he was allowed to continue teaching at the university longer than the ones who hadn't. Thus, it seemed as though he was safe, and he was going to be all right. However, after awhile, all his exemptions fell away and he was also kicked out.¹⁴

Who is a Jew: Dividing Germans from Jews by Genealogy and Religion

Article 5 of the November 1935 *Reichsgesetzblatt* says:

A Jew is anyone who descended from at least three grandparents who were racially full Jews ... A Jew is also anyone who descended from two full Jewish parents if: (a) he belonged to the Jewish religious community at the time this law was issued, or who joined the community later; (b) he was married to a Jewish person, at the time the law was issued or married one subsequently; (c) he is the offspring from a marriage with a Jew ... (d) he is the offspring of an extramarital relationship with a Jew.¹⁵

On the matter of family identity, Susanne Batzdorff recounts a childhood experience at school when she was a student at a public school in Breslau:

I had a good friend who was not Jewish, and we were asked as one of the assignments at school, to write down our family tree. We were supposed to trace it up to and through the great grandparents, if we knew who our great grandparents were. So we did that. I saw what the friend sitting next to me had written, and I saw that her grandmother's last name was very obviously Jewish.

So I said to my parents when I came home, “You know this friend of mine — I think her grandmother must be Jewish, because she has a Jewish name.”

My father said, “Yes, we know them and that she is Jewish.” He explained that

of course the family kept this secret, because it was an embarrassment to them. The girl was trying very hard to fit in with Nazi friends. In fact she was sometimes wearing a swastika, things like that.

This was early in the game, when we were not quite as restricted in our speech as we later became. At this time, we were not so careful.

I had another very good friend. This girl and my other girlfriend were close, the three of us. She said something to me about this girl, and I said, "I'm surprised she's wearing a swastika because she has a Jewish grandmother."

This girl apparently retold the story all over class, and the girl with the Jewish grandmother went home and told her parents that she wasn't aware the grandmother was Jewish. The whole thing blew up, and the father said, "It's a lie, don't believe it." The girl then came back and told everybody what a lie I had told about her.¹⁶

Raul Hilberg focuses on the Nazi strategy for defining who was a Jew by tracing a person's genealogy, and using that to divide Aryans from non-Aryans. A Jew was defined as a person who had three or four grandparents who were Jewish. Non-Aryans included part-Jews. Under the divisions created by Dr. Bernard Losener, and incorporated into the Reich Citizenship Law of November 14, 1935, *Mischlinge* (mongrels) of the first degree were persons descended from two Jewish grandparents, but did not belong to the Jewish religion, and were not married to a Jewish person on September 15, 1935. *Mischlinge* of the second degree were persons descended from one Jewish grandparent.

Even if your parents were Aryan, the fact that two grandparents were Jewish and went to synagogue would make you Jewish enough to be classified as non-Aryan. If there was any question about your grandparents' religiosity as Jews, an inquiry could be made of your great-grandparents' religious practice.¹⁷

Dividing German Citizens from Jews by Isolating Jewish Professionals

Suzanne Batzdorff recalls the effect on her mother of Nazi decrees forbidding German citizens from being treated by Jewish doctors. It was an officially sanctioned boycott of Jewish professionals by making it economically more costly for Germans to pay for the services of Jewish professionals. The major effect on Susanne as a girl was that her family had to move to another part of the city. She tells of that move in the following:

My mother was in practice as a gynecologist and then she could no longer treat patients who were insured because they were not covered if they had a Jewish doctor, so her practice diminished and that's why she moved into another area of the city where there were more Jewish patients, and she hoped that she would make a better living there. And that's when we moved into that area.¹⁸

About the impact on those in the medical profession, Alfred Batzdorff recalls:

[T]he first impact I think was that medical insurance costs were not permitted to be paid to Jewish doctors. Thus, that doctor's clientele was limited to people who could pay out of pocket. That was when non-Jews were still permitted to go to Jewish doctors. But they had to be able to afford to pay for it. Of course later on, the doctors lost their licenses. Before they lost their medical licenses, I remember

that my father had a car. They all lost their drivers' licenses, so he had to hire a chauffeur to drive him everywhere. These are parts of this gradual deterioration.¹⁹

A group of Orthodox Jewish leaders, as early as October 1933, wrote to Hitler:

[E]ven where no law applies, economic activity has been made extraordinarily difficult. Even if Jewish activity in the economic field has not been limited directly by the law, there is in practice in all of Germany an anti-Jewish boycott. Nation, local and public enterprises have been forbidden to buy from Jews, while the Nazi Party has made a similar ruling for all members of the NSDAP. In many cases even low-level Jewish employees have been removed from economic enterprises, to say nothing of Jewish members of their management.²⁰

It was not just Jewish businessmen who were affected. On the pretext that there were too many doctors, decrees eliminating Jewish practitioners were justified as bringing the proportion of doctors into line with the actual needs of the population. Jewish lawyers, too, were denied licenses to practice; some were disbarred as early as 1933. For awhile, Jewish attorneys were protected if they had fought on the front during the war, but Aryan attorneys lobbied for their removal.²¹

Bullying and Isolating Jewish Children in Public Schools

Both Susanne and Alfred Batzdorff remember the oppressive social climate and the unpleasant atmosphere at school. The Law against Overcrowding of German Schools and Higher Institutions was decreed in April 1933. It said, "The number of non-Aryan Germans who may be admitted to schools ... must not exceed a number proportionate to the Aryan students in each school ... compared to the percentage of non-Aryans within the entire German population. The proportion is fixed uniformly for the whole Reich."²² In other words, public schools with a high percentage of Jewish students would be segregated through expelling enough Jewish students. Thus, every school would have only a minority of Jewish students corresponding to the overall percentage of Jews in the German population at large.

As Sonnert and Holten conclude in their interviews of survivors:

[T]he children had to learn quickly and painfully that they did not belong to the new "Reich" that was being constructed and that they were now considered the enemy. One prime arena in which this lesson was taught was the schools, where the Jewish children were increasingly marginalized until they were no longer permitted even to attend public schools and were transferred to special schools run by Jewish teachers.²³

One signal that school children did not belong to the new Reich was the isolation they felt at school. As Alfred Batzdorff recalls:

I think the first effect that we really personally felt was the isolation in school. People who were our friends all of a sudden didn't talk to us. We weren't invited to their birthday parties. And they wouldn't come to our house. I'm not talking about exceptions. There were of course exceptions. But the general picture was isolation. The personal loss of a friend was a disappointment. You thought, "Oh, I thought he was a friend, that we were best friends." All of a sudden, this is what's happening.

You also felt ostracized. You felt rejected. We were socially rejected.²⁴

He continues:

Of course Jewish writers were dismissed from the newspapers, and then Jewish teachers. The schools were run by the State, and in some cases, sub-contracted to the Church for administrative purposes. But Jewish teachers were just dismissed, so then they organized. There had always been a Jewish school. But immediately other Jewish schools were organized to absorb the teachers who were let go. It became less and less pleasant to go to school because, as I told you, you are not only going to school to learn, you're also a member of the student body. Thus, when some ostracized you, it made life at school less and less pleasant.²⁵

Susanne Batzdorff recalls being embarrassed by a pro-Nazi teacher:

[There was] anti-Semitism among the teachers. We had one particular teacher who was just viciously Nazi and very enthusiastic about everything that they stood for and that Hitler stood for. He was always needling me. He was always asking questions which had some relationship to the Bible. He said, "Well, you ought to know that because you're Jewish." He embarrassed me in front of the whole class because I didn't know the answer. I don't even know or remember what the question was, but it was somehow related to the Bible.²⁶

Various decrees had the effect of ostracizing Jewish children from a normal social life of recreation and play. On June 17, 1933, shortly after coming to power, Hitler dissolved all the local and national boy scout organizations. Hitler replaced those organizations with the *Hitlerjugend*.²⁷ Thus, there were no recreational youth clubs that Jewish grade-schoolers or teens could join, since they were non-Aryan.

The Second Execution Order to the Law of the Hitler Youth (Youth Service Regulation) of March 25, 1939 refers to an earlier regulation of December 1936, which in turn incorporates the Law of Reich Citizenship of November 17, 1935. While all juveniles from 10 to 18 were obliged to serve in the Hitler Youth, Jews were excluded from membership in Hitler Youth. Since Jews were not citizens of the Reich they could not engage in public service.²⁸

Susanne Batzdorff recalls: "I remember the day when my brother and I went to the swimming pool, which was quite a distance from where we lived. We had gone there several times a week. One day we came and they also had the sign up — *Juden unerwünscht* — so we went back home again."²⁹

Alfred Batzdorff added, "It was so surprising; they didn't announce it beforehand. It was all of a sudden. You would try to go to a place you'd always been, and ... [then there would be the sign] "Jews not desirable" (*Juden unerwünscht*).³⁰

Jewish religious leaders, teachers and parents created alternative organizations for their children, and encouraged them to create their own. Alfred Batzdorff recalls:

[W]e had our own sports club, and swimming club. Since we didn't go out, we formed our own little social group, and we met every Saturday night. There was Sue and her brother, and her cousin, and myself. They lived in the same house as we did, and her cousin lived a couple of blocks away. We founded our little club and met every Saturday night. We read plays, and a couple of times a year we per-

formed plays for our parents and uncles and aunts. Those are fond memories. We had a newspaper that we still have. It came out once a month or so. We had a real little cultural society.³¹

Conclusion: Memory as a Principle of Action

Exemplary memory in this paper involves an analysis of the process by which the Nazi decrees were issued. By recalling how the decree-issuing happened, and how it by-passed a normal legislative process, we can extract a lesson from it so that memory becomes “a principle of action for the present.”

The Reichstag burned down on February 27, 1933. The Nazis took the occasion to accuse the Communists of a plot against the government, so they arrested Communist leaders and parliament deputies. On February 28, they persuaded President von Hindenburg to issue an executive order, a decree of protection for the people and the state, essentially the declaration of martial law. This order suspended constitutional rights, freedom of opinion, press, assembly, association, and freedom from search and seizure. The purpose of the decree was supposedly to protect the common good by establishing control over anarchy.

New elections were called for March 5, 1933. The Communist party was denied a place on the ballot. Even though the Nazis gained only 288 seats out of 647, Hitler persuaded the right wing to push through the *Enabling Act* on March 23. This took away the power of passing legislation from the Reichstag, and gave it to the Nazi-controlled government. Other political parties were forced out. On July 14, a law declared that the Nazi party was the only legal party in Germany.

When the Nazis decreed on December 1 that there was now unity between the Party itself and the State, the government ceased to function according to traditional divisions of executive, legislative and judicial branches. Various ministers, including the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of the Judiciary, became Hitler's executive officers. Hindenburg died on August 2, 1934. Hitler then combined the office of President and office of Chancellor — which he had held under Hindenburg — and declared himself Führer.³² The Nazis used the *Enabling Act* to maintain control over Germany until its defeat in World War II in 1945.

The principal structural factor in creating a government over which citizens had no control was suspension of both the legislative and judicial process. The legislative process was obliterated and replaced by Hitler's executive administrative decrees. Hitler replaced the judiciary structure of the German Supreme Court by the People's Court with members appointed by Hitler's appointed ministers. There was no guarantee of due process. In 1939, Jews were forbidden from using the courts to seek redress.

Explaining the need for a European treaty guaranteeing human rights, one of its leading proponents, a former French Minister of Justice, Pierre-Henri Teitgen, speaking to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe in August 1949 put it as follows:

Democracies do not become Nazi countries in one day. Evil progresses cunningly, with a minority operating ... to remove the levers of control. One by one, freedoms

are suppressed, in one sphere after the other. Public opinion and the entire national conscience are asphyxiated. And then, when everything is in order, the 'Führer' is installed and the evolution continues even to the oven of the crematorium.³³

It is instructive to remember how, years before the Final Solution, the Jews suffered a gradual erosion of ordinary rights of daily life. The memory of this gradual erosion exists as a warning for citizens in democratic societies today. There is always a need to maintain "separation of powers" in municipal and state governments as well as at the national level. Applicable too, is the question of "special restrictions" which concern only minorities, and not the majority of citizens. The strategy of incrementally denying some citizens their civil liberties while other citizens were left unaffected, lessened the likelihood that German citizens as a body would react. Inflicting economic and social hardships specifically on the Jewish community, but not the general population, made it less likely that the Catholic Church and other Christian churches would protest these inconveniences done to a faith group that was not their own. Early in the Nazi era, the erosion of civil liberties was not actually life-threatening and since restrictions were imposed only on the Jewish community, they did not inflict suffering on the general population. For those who may have felt loyal to Jewish friends, neighbors and professional colleagues, it was not convenient to protest, and often economically advantageous to cooperate with the Nazi government.

The gradual stifling of daily life of the Jewish community made the process of repression seem invisible to the general population. What is the lesson? One is certainly the need for alertness, even in a democratic society, to the usurpation of power by the executive branch of local or national government. When the legislative process becomes a mere servant to the demands of the executive branch, there is a risk that laws will be simply "promulgations" without debate, without informed choice, and without intelligent adoption by a vote of legitimately elected law-makers. When the executive suppresses the judiciary, or turns it into a mere figurehead, there is no authoritative body to provide impartial review of laws, guarantee fair procedures, and protection of the rights of all citizens equally.

The horror of the crematoria confronts us with the possibility that a sense of common morality can collapse even within a modern and civilized society. The steady erosion of the Jews' civil liberties and loss of their freedom to function as human beings in society — this is the decade-long process, the promulgation of decree after decree, that less dramatically made the final tragedy inevitable.

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ENDNOTES

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³ See "Socioeconomic Achievements" pp. 65-92, and "Partial Assimilation — Complex Identities," pp. 93-139, in Gerhard Sonnert and Gerald Holton, *What Happened to the Children Who Fled Nazi Persecution* (New York: Palgrave/McMillan, 2006).

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⁵ Volf, pp. 87-88.

⁶ Volf, p. 88, citing Tzvetan Todorov, "The Abuses of Memory," *Common Knowledge* 5, no. 1 (1996): 14.

⁷ Eric A. Johnson and Karl-Heinz Reuband, *What We Knew: Terror, Mass Murder, and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany, An Oral History*. (Cambridge, MA: Basic Books/Perseus, 2005): 270-71.

⁸ *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. 1, pp. 980-81. I have re-arranged the examples of decrees listed on these pages and put them in chronological order.

⁹ Susanne Batzdorff notes that deprivation of the rights of citizenship happened earlier than 1935. This particular notation in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. I, is linked with the 1935 Reichsgesetzblatt, Part I, p. 1146, signed by Frick. See p. 980.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 982.

¹¹ *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. III, 1397-PS, pp. 981-82.

¹² *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. IV, 1417-PS, Article 4.1, p. 9.

¹³ *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. IV, 1417-PS, Article 4.2, p. 9.

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¹⁵ *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. IV 1417-PS, Article 5.2, p. 9.

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²³ Sonnert and Holton, *What Happened to the Children Who Fled*, p. 23.

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²⁶ Susanne Batzdorff, Interview of January 13, 2010.

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²⁸ *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Vol. IV, 2115-PS, pp. 745-46; exclusion of Jews in Article 7, p. 748.

²⁹ Susanne Batzdorff, Interview of January 13, 2010.

³⁰ Alfred Batzdorff, Interview of January 13, 2010.

³¹ Alfred Batzdorff, Interview of January 13, 2010.

³² Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, pp. 101-102.

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BETWEEN PROMISE AND FULFILLMENT SHOAH/NAKBAH

OFFERINGS OF MEMORY AND HISTORY



BY JUDITH MENDELSON ROOD

This paper recounts a journey, an enabling event, and a transformation. The journey begins with stories from my youth. These stories include those told by my grandmother — my Omi — and my father as they recounted their flight from Germany in the shadow of the Nazi threat. The journey continues with my adolescent encounter with Israel as a high school “pilgrim.” The journey is enriched with the pursuit of my graduate studies in the Middle East, my post-graduate research, and my teaching on the history of the Middle East and Islam over the past fifteen years. The enabling event was a visit to Theresienstadt in 2007. There I received, finally, the peace that I needed to write about the connections between my family history and my scholarship. The present milepost on the journey is marked by a transformed perspective — one framed in a dispensationalist view — enriched by memory and the study of history that might be used redemptively in the contemporary Arab-Israeli conflict. By making primary sources available to other scholars in this paper, it is my hope that we can further our understanding of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, and as well, we can oppose the growing hatred toward Muslims and Arabs in our societies. For such a time as this, we must speak up so that future generations will not point to us and say that we, too, have failed to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.

I. My Journey Begins: Memories

Growing up, I eavesdropped on my grandmother's conversations with my father about those dark days, and their powerful memories began to transform my dreams. My grandmother told and retold her stories about the event known as *Kristallnacht* throughout her life. So unforgettable were her memories, so inconceivable these events that they became my own. Only following the death of his mother in 2006 at the age of 97, did my father begin telling his own recollections of the night that he and Omi fled Europe under fire from the embattled port of Rotterdam.

As a child, I began having a recurring nightmare about what happened to my family and what I was learning about the death camps. In the nightmare I am free-falling down an endless pit and I saw numberless people wearing concentration camp uniforms staring at me from behind barbed wire. I could do nothing for them. Falling, I was helpless and left with a deepening despair during my waking hours.

Why had God abandoned His people — my people? Why were we helpless in the face of evil? What would it have been like to be on the train with my great-grandparents, to arrive at a concentration camp, to be stripped and sent to my death? Surely I would not have survived the terror and degradation that they experienced. My nightmare plagued me until I came to

understand that God had not abandoned His people or humanity. As a young woman, the questions that were central to my sense of identity had to do with anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, with my nationality and my religion. I read deeply in Jewish philosophy and history, seeking to understand how other Jews thought about what had happened, and later, I began to study what, if anything, Christians had to say about it. To remember and to preserve memory, the task of the historian, is an undertaking that for me could only be done from within a paradigm of hope, founded upon my trust in the promises of God as they were recorded in the *Tanakh*, a God who was present with my people in their present as He was in the past and will be in the future.

When I was a child I had envisioned my great-grandparents at a death camp, but as I grew up I learned that Theresienstadt was actually just a small city that had developed inside the largest fortress in Europe. I had read many things about Theresienstadt and knew a great deal about it, but I feared going there. Still, I thought the time had come. In August, 2007 I visited the small Czech city of Theresienstadt, where my paternal great-grandparents perished; first Jenny Mendel Moses, on September 5, 1942, and then, one month later, Alexander Moses on November 7, 1942. The tale I have to tell centers around the exclusion of my people by their neighbors in the modern era, which for me begins in eighteenth century Europe and the Enlightenment. My husband Paul and I drove in, at first passing the red brick bulwarks of the nineteenth century fortress, built in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars to prevent another similar invasion. It was never needed. The next wars were of a different sort. The Nazis used Theresienstadt for propaganda, portraying it in a famous film as their model “Jewish city.” They invited the Red Cross to investigate the conditions in a staged visit.

At first we toured the museum exhibits. I brought with me photographs and the official death notices my grandmother finally received in 1947. The museum archivist was able to point out on a map the exact location of the apartments where my great-grandparents, sick with dysentery and starving to death, had spent their last months. One of the apartments had a splendid view of the park in the center of town. But in those days it was walled off and Jews, crowded together in unimaginably diseased conditions, were forbidden to go there for even a breath of fresh air. They could see the baroque church on the typical central European town square. A few buildings down on their block the Gestapo had their headquarters. As I stood there, contemplating my elderly great-grandparents squeezed into their tiny apartments crowded with other old people, the wind blew and an old man shuffled past. In a way, everything seemed as though it were normal. But the crimes of the past clung to the walls like the historic plaques identifying the buildings. The place had a desolate feeling, still showing the stifling years of neglect following the war. We then went to the official cemetery, the one with the big Star of David, next to the military garrisons, thinking we had seen all that there was to see and that we had found where Jenny and Alexander Moses had been buried. I was wrong. There was another, smaller Jewish cemetery marked on the map, and we made our way there.

I was filled with foreboding as the gray skies began to release a steady, cold drizzle.

We went into the crematorium, which I had not expected to find there, since this was a Jewish cemetery. Inside, the process of preparing the bodies for cremation and burial was explained, and the walls were covered with statistical information on the diseases that had killed the residents of this Nazi “model Jewish city” by the thousands. Reading the exhibits there, I realized that my great-grandparents had died before the mass die-offs had necessitated the larger, public burial ground. Instead, my great-grandparents’ ashes are in an unmarked grave in the Jewish cemetery. As I stood and said the *Kaddish*, I realized I was their first relative to visit them and I finally received the peace that I needed to write about that which I had never before been able.

The truth of memory is what it means to the one who remembers. Conveying memory has become an important aspect of public life as we try to commemorate what has happened in the past in a way that new generations can learn from and internalize what has happened into their own memories. Internalizing these memories is what scholar Marianne Hirsch has dubbed “postmemory.”¹ This concept “captures the way in which later generations ‘grow up dominated by the stories of a previous generation, shaped by traumatic events they can neither understand nor re-create.’” What is so powerful about this form of memory is that “its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation.” This is true for many of the children and grandchildren of the Shoah/Nakba generations.

The nightmarish and haunting images that my grandmother and father evoked in telling their experiences were transformed into my own postmemories, as real to me as any event that I have ever written about in my work as an historian. The powers of imagination and empathy, essential to the historian, intensify when the events they illuminate are part of one’s own history. Perhaps the images of my family’s memories were even more important to me than the events of my own life because of their harrowing narrative power. Imagining my father’s experiences as a seven year old boy accompanying his parents as they were expelled from their country and imagining the dangers they experienced changed me. As I became a young woman, I often wondered what it would have been like to be my grandmother, or her mother, in those days. Their memories made me empathetic, passionate, concerned about justice and forgiveness, deeply suspicious of authority, and cynical about human nature.² I did not have to suffer in order to know that suffering has shaped my identity and my world. Only hope and the pursuit of justice, repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, and redemption can heal the victims of violence.³

My connection with the Palestinians was thus forged by my own postmemory — as the first-born of a Holocaust survivor who found refuge, and a homeland, in the United States. My faith in my father’s and grandmother’s credibility as witnesses who reliably transmitted what happened to them and to other members of the family was complete. My search for answers about my own identity and “the Jewish problem” led me to Israel as a sixteen year old. Yet rather than infusing me with a desire to make Aliyah, or to emigrate to the Jewish State, my

first trip to Israel did the opposite: rather than a redemptive experience affirming the triumph of the Jewish spirit in Zion, everywhere I looked I could see only brokenness and injustice. Somehow, that brokenness caused me to love Israel and my people in a different way. Amidst tragedy people were facing new beginnings under seemingly impossible circumstances.

Yet at the same time, Palestinians — Muslims and Christians — lost their homes and became dispossessed, as did Jews in the Arab lands following the establishment of the modern State of Israel. The money we were donating at our Hebrew school to the Jewish National Fund to plant trees was being used to erase the ruins of Palestinian villages throughout Israel. The Arabs of Israel were not truly equal citizens in Israeli society. After 1948, there continued to be enormous suffering on both sides: the Israelis from their ongoing rejection by their neighbors, and the Palestinians from their displacement and losses, and the betrayals of their own kin. As a young woman I was inspired by Israeli courage and heroism, by their desire to rebuild and begin anew, and by their hope for peace, yet I was troubled by the fear and hatred towards Arabs that pulsed through Israeli society. I loved the passion with which people lived their lives, and the way that ideas had real meaning to them, but I had to reject the structural inequalities of the Israeli state. In their search for social and political justice, both Judaism and Islam seek to restructure society, to fix the world. My liberal worldview was premised in the idea of freedom — mixed with questions of the Divine, Jewish and Muslim solutions each promising redemption and restoration. Yet the Holocaust taught us with finality the dangers of state religion. Rather than faith, religions become ideologies when they are used for political purposes.

The plain truth of the Palestinian dilemma seen through my sixteen year-old eyes made me think only of my father's stories about Jews being bullied on German street corners by "police" who demanded identity papers and humiliated them on the street. As I watched Israeli Jews hassle Palestinians on street corners from the comfort of my youth group's luxury tourist coach, my mind raced back to my father's stories about his dad's escape from Nazi thugs on *Kristallnacht*. The wild beauties of the land and the lovely traces of rural Arab culture moved me and made me want to learn more about the Arab history of Israel and Palestine. I returned to the United States brimming with thankfulness that I was born in a different land where I was free and could find my own way. I dreamed of studying the Jewish dilemma created with the establishment of Israel, first by trying to understand her Arab neighbors before Zionism. I returned to Israel to study at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, first for one year as an undergraduate, and then again for another fifteen months as a graduate student doing doctoral research in the Islamic Court archives. The time that I spent there allowed me to become fluent in Hebrew and Arabic, to take courses in Middle Eastern and Islamic history, and to experience life in Israel among Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

II. Jews and Jewish Christians in Modern German History

Until I began teaching the Holocaust at Christian colleges and universities, I had no idea that many of the Jews killed in the Holocaust were professing Christians. I was aware that many

German Jews had converted to Christianity, especially beginning in the eighteenth century. I knew this because of my family's name — Mendelsohn — and my own family history. The famed Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn initiated and epitomized the Jewish Enlightenment, the *Haskalah*, which marked the beginning of Jewish emancipation and assimilation into German society. However, three of his children converted to Christianity and his most illustrious grandson is the composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. In my own family, my great-aunt Marie Mendel, the gentile wife of my grandmother's brother Jacques, was the one who took care of my great-grandparents for three years until they were deported to Theresienstadt.

I have often thought of Christians, sitting in the pews with their church friends, fellowshiping and identifying themselves with them, suddenly being expelled from their very seats because they were suddenly labeled "Jewish." I wondered; how did they feel?

It turns out that there is a significant body of information about this occurrence. As I learned more about the topic, I decided to begin the process of writing about the fate of "Jewish Christians" from a position of faith, by which is meant that I take their religious identity seriously, especially since there were actually disadvantages, rather than advantages, to belonging to churches in Germany during the interwar period.⁴

Generally, the topic of Jewish Christians and the Holocaust has been neglected in Holocaust Studies. With the exception of the work of Victoria Barnett, who translated Gerlach's pioneering study, *And the Witnesses Were Silent*, and then went on to write *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler*. There is little information available about their fate.⁵ The study of this field is essential for Christians and Jews to understand this dimension of the Holocaust. Theresienstadt can serve as a window into the truth of what happened to Christians of Jewish descent during the Holocaust. Much more research, both statistical and qualitative, is necessary in order to fully address this topic. Nonetheless, it provides a starting point to address the contemporary crisis in Jewish/Christian/Muslim relations. As we begin, it is important to understand the issues of race and identity in German history.

The Churches and German Nationalism

It may be helpful to remember that the German nation was unified only in 1871. From 1871 until 1933 when Hitler grabbed power (January 30, 1933), is a period of only 62 years — about the same length of time since the establishment of the State of Israel (1948) until today. German nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was amorphous. German identity began to be drawn against the identity of its enemies — especially against France.⁶ German liberalism was on the defense against German authoritarianism. The Weimar Republic, the liberal post-World War I government of Germany, is, to this very day, identified with liberalism and "Jewish" cosmopolitan influences. Most importantly, the Weimar Republic was viewed by many nationalists, including most Christians, as defeatist.⁷ The post-World War I era was the time when Germany's state church — the Evangelical Church — was increasingly influenced by German nationalist ideologies. The theology and ecclesiology operative here facilitated Christian acceptance of Nazi policies regarding Jews. Nazi anti-Semitism reflected

the dominant ideological beliefs of most Christians' theology and ecclesiology. Church history in Germany is complicated, and is beyond the parameters of this paper, except insofar as it touches upon the Holocaust.

On September 27, 1817, Frederick William III (1797-1840) responding to theologian Friederich Schliermacher's 1807 proposal that the state give more independence to the churches, "called for a union" of the Reformed and Lutheran churches, which, the monarch hoped, would "grow into a quickened Evangelical Christian Church."⁸ This ecumenical, liberal church was universalist, romantic, and nationalist — the highest expression of the German people and Western civilization.⁹ For Schleiermacher and many of his students, including the Protestant Felix Mendelssohn, Hegelian teleology in the late nineteenth century situated Evangelical, Lutheran-Calvinist Protestantism — shaped by reason and expressed in community — as the end of history.

Many modern thinkers, both Jewish and Christian, found this universalist message very attractive. Accepting a historicist interpretation of Catholicism and Judaism as bound by their times, these liberal Protestants concluded that only moral and ethical principles mattered, developing what scholar Jacob Neusner has called a "confessional paradigm" of belief.¹⁰ During the eighteenth century, led by philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, a new movement of Jews embraced the Enlightenment view that faith is a private matter and that religious identity should play no part in civil society. Thus, the *maskalim*, or Jewish reformers who embraced reason, challenged the opposition of traditional Judaism to assimilation into secular society. Many Jews oppose the *Haskalah*, the Enlightenment-inspired Reform Movement, to this day. In the academy, Jewish and Protestant scholars of the "science" of religious studies framed their view of civilizational development from "primitive" to "advanced." Thus, many modernist liberals, both Jewish and Christian, viewed traditional Judaism as a "primitive" religion, characterized by superstition, ignorance, and tribalism. A new secular supersessionism posited liberal Protestantism and Reformed Judaism as the most progressive and reasonable religious systems. Merging into a universalist, secularized, deist ethical and moral philosophy, framed within a secular *weltanschauung*, this Reform view enabled "enlightened" Jews to become modern "Germans."

The Enlightenment, Jewish Assimilation, and the Judenmission

Of this period historian Ernst Christian Helmreich wrote, "The conversion of Jews was no doubt an aim of the Christian churches from their very beginning in Germany. However, the first mission society for the conversion of the Jew dates only to [1822]" when the Berlin Israel Mission, later known as the Berlin Association for the Spreading of Christianity among the Jews, was established.¹¹ Other important societies were established in 1843 in Cologne and in 1871 in Leipzig which had been the home of Felix Mendelssohn's concert hall and was an important Jewish Christian center. Franz Delitzsch established a learned society dedicated to the academic study of Jewish Christianity, the *Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum* there in 1880. In addition, the Protestant land churches and the Old Prussian Union supported Jewish work.

Throughout the history of Christianity, the experience of Jewish converts has been problematic. Rejected by their families but still considered Jewish by many Christians, Christians of Jewish background were torn between two worlds. Assimilation into the Church was the Jewish convert's expectation, based upon the universalism preached by liberal Protestant theology in the nineteenth century. However, Jews were forced to surrender their ethnic identity and cultural distinctiveness in order to gain admittance into the Church. Nevertheless, Gentile Christians often still regarded them as Jews.

With the Reformation, the translation of the Bible into the vernacular languages resulted in new philosemitic movements as Christians began to connect with the Jews by way of their discovery of the people of the Old Testament. This development that flowered into a Hebraist Christianity is best exemplified by the Huguenot communities of Vichy France that sheltered Jewish refugees during the Holocaust.¹²

Modern Jewish views concerning traditional Orthodoxy brought Jews into a still evolving German culture. Political liberalism was shaping modern German views concerning religious toleration and freedom at the same time that autocracy was shaping the Empire. During this era, the secularizing Jewish community impugned the motivations of Jewish converts, deriding their desire to assimilate into the broader culture, finding it impossible that any of these converts had had authentic religious experiences. With the rise of liberalism in Germany following the Revolution of 1848, some converts did find a home among Christians. At least, before 1935, a Christian Jew could say, "To this extent, the Christians were honest: whoever was baptized, belonged," said Marga Muesel, "I was baptized, and I belonged. ... That means that I was accepted. For a young man of 20, when he finds friends, that's important."¹³

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Jews turned to Christ as Jewish redeemer and the universal savior, intermarrying with non-Jews, and assimilating into the German nation at the same time that many Germans, reacting against the hated "Jewish" influences on the Church and German nation, had begun to relocate the origins of German Christianity in pagan, not Jewish, culture.¹⁴ The discovery of the Jewish Jesus by the German theologians using the hermeneutic of "higher criticism" ironically helped to propel German anti-Semitism to new heights.

Romanticism and Liberalism in German Identity

German identity was still in the process following the disastrous First World War. At the foundation of modern German nationalism were two competing theological ideas about Jews. On the one hand, theologians brought the methodologies of "higher criticism" to the study of the New Testament and rediscovered the Jewish Jesus. Among liberals, philosemitic tendencies emerged. On the other hand, anti-Jewish ideas were embedded in the shaping of German identity in both state and church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This last presented a dual threat, the first propounding a nationalist Gentile Christianity, was opposed to what may be called the universalist, liberal, assimilationist "Judeo-Christianity;" the second, the modernist, pseudo-scientific, populist attack on the Jews based upon biology and

“cosmopolitanism,” was portrayed as a threat to German aesthetics and racial superiority.¹⁵ In the popular mind, historian Victoria Barnett explains,

[T]he Jews were blamed for a number of crises, even when their purported role in one would logically eliminate their role in another. In 1819, German farmers rioted and burned Jewish businesses, blaming the Jews for industrial changes. Following the attempted revolution in 1848, Jews were linked to the workers' movement; thirty years later, after the stock market crash, the Jews were blamed for controlling all the money. In 1918, an “international Jewish plot” was blamed for the terms of the Versailles Treaty.

Nonetheless Jewish civil emancipation accelerated their assimilation in Germany, and, between 1869 and 1933, the number of Jews in the state bureaucracy increased.¹⁶ During this period, Protestant anti-Semitism did not focus explicitly on race, but on religion. “The only real contact the church had” with Jews was, according to Barnett, “through the *Judenmission*, the mission to convert the Jews.” Perhaps surprisingly, many Protestant anti-Semites respected “traditional Judaism” and “viewed orthodox Jews as ‘the people of the covenant.’”¹⁷

Nevertheless, the unsettled question of the place of Jews in Germany, and the resulting ambivalence and even hostility to the Old Testament among German Christians led the acclaimed theologian Adolf Harnack (1851-1930), to write,

To reject the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake the church rightly resisted; to retain it in the sixteenth century was a fate from which the Reformation could not escape; but still to preserve it in the nineteenth century as one of the canonical documents of Protestantism is the result of religious and ecclesiastical paralysis.¹⁸

Strikingly, by contrast, one prominent Protestant leader, and infamous anti-Semite, Adolph Stoecker, “excluded the ‘just and modest Jews’ from his attacks” even in his later speeches. In response, another Protestant leader, Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, wrote to Stoecker that Christian wrath “should not be directed against observant Jews, but ‘only the Jews without religion, who ... together with the lapsed Christians are one in their hatred of the cross, the throne, and the altar.’”¹⁹

Thus, there was a range of views concerning Judaism. Most Germans — Jewish and Christian — had no understanding of the theological distinctions among them. Most Germans were unaware of the vibrant intellectual discourse surrounding the relationship of Jews and Christians in the “Reformed” modern synagogue of Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber.²⁰ Nor did the Jews appreciate the growing proto-Zionist movement among some Protestants.

Judaism was, like Protestantism, primarily an urban religion, and those who lived out in the country did not have much social contact with Jews. However, the little-understood German colonialist project in the frontier borderlands between Poland and Germany encouraged many German-speaking Jews to establish themselves in the Province of Poznan, for example, where my grandfather was born. Following the First World War, the German defeat led to the emigration of large numbers of these German Jews, along with thousands of others from the East, back to Germany, exacerbating German anti-Semitism in the decades leading

up to the Second World War.²¹

The social and political movements operating in the Weimer Republic concerned many Germans. Barnett wrote the following of this constellation of forces:

[T]he element in “Christian” anti-Semitism that subsequently made it so useful for other anti-Semitic groups in Germany: the linking of the Jews with political enemies. The nationalism of Protestant pastors, their distrust of the Social Democrats, fear of communism, monarchism, and essential conservatism — these beliefs were, in their opinion, the direct opposite of the “secular” and “Jewish” forces threatening German culture and faith: liberalism, secularism, socialism, anti-monarchism.²²

Now, mixed with an increasingly popular racist ideology — the result of decades of Darwinian pseudo-scientific naturalistic social and biological science — resistance to Judaism and the presence of Jewish Christians in the German Church among conservative and traditional congregations accelerated. German evangelicals, fearing political liberalism on the one hand and embracing the “racial anti-Semitism of [Arthur de] Gobineau and [Houston Stewart] Chamberlain, the anti-supernaturalism of the scientific criticism of the Old Testament by [the son of famous Hebraist and philosemite Franz Delitzsch] [Frederich] Delitzsch, and the anti-Christian cultural criticism of [Friedrich] Nietzsche),” turned their backs on their Jewish flock. And theology was brought to bear on this new racist perspective. Harnack in particular, marginalized the Old Testament as “Jewish” writing,

Still, some will say that Yahweh of the OT is not identical with our understanding of the God revealed in Jesus Christ. Yahweh is still viewed as a national God whose activity centers on his people Israel and who is this-worldly in his concerns. Like the Manichaeans of the fourth century A.D., many find Yahweh to be an alien deity because he is jealous ... he commands the extermination of all Canaanites and Amalekites ... and he orders and directs evil”²³

Eventually, the “German Christians” cut the Old Testament out of their Bibles and excised the “Hebraisms” out of the New Testament, falling into the same heresy as Marcion in the early Christian period. Yet all the while, even in this poisoned theological atmosphere, Jews continued to convert. And this was the paradox. German pietists and evangelicals believed that the Great Commission applied to the Jews and Gentiles. Even during decades of increasing German anti-Semitism, evangelical efforts to reach the Jewish people for Christ increased. Thus, even though many Germans were not willing to accept Jews socially as Germans, many Jews believed that church membership would make them Germans and allow them to break away from the strictures of rabbinic Orthodoxy. Unconvinced by the Jewish Reformed movement, they chose to reframe their faith on the basis of the Jewishness of Jesus and the universal Christian message of the liberal Evangelical Church. Thus, in this maelstrom of social change, the theological anti-Judaism of the “German Christian” movement merged with the increasingly virulent “modern” anti-Semitism in German society.

Jews and Jewish Christians in the Shadow of Nazism

Incredibly, in 1933, “only 1.5% of the German population was Jewish, and the actual number

of Jews in influential positions was far less than popularly assumed — only 4 of the 250 government ministers during the entire Weimer Republic were Jewish.²⁴ Barnett surmises that, despite this small percentage of practicing Jews and Jewish Christians in Germany when Hitler came to power,

[T]he reason that anti-Semitism was so consistently and successfully used as a political tool was that Judaism remained, for most Germans, something foreign and therefore threatening. The Jews were “the other,” linked with the political threat of the moment, and, whatever the political circumstances, they were invariably portrayed as the enemies of nationalism.

And this essential otherness prevented baptized Jews from being fully accepted in their parishes.

Despite the Protestant position that whoever was baptized was a full Christian, church discussions of the “Jewish question” reveal the depth of ambivalence on the matter. On the one hand, a church newspaper editorial in 1874 rather laboriously arrived at the conclusion that Christian baptism did not render the Jews “German” (not just Christian): “The Jewish question is not a religious question, but a national one. The Jews in Germany are not Germans but Jews, they are another people and remain another people, they will never become Germans as long as many of them don’t become Christian, and, in so doing, remove themselves from their national past.”²⁵

On the other hand, Barnett points out, “many Jewish Christians had long ceased to identify themselves with Judaism.” She recounts Dietrich Goldschmidt’s thoughts about the lead-up to the Holocaust. Goldschmidt, the son of a Jewish Christian father and a non-Jewish mother,

[R]ecalled that his father, an historian who lost his job at the end of 1934 because of the “Aryan” laws, was “baffled” by what happened to him: “I think one could say it that way ... My father also said, “Oh, we wouldn’t have all these annoyances with the Jews if so many Eastern European Jews hadn’t immigrated here after World War I. ... If that hadn’t happened, things wouldn’t have reached this difficult stage.” That’s utter nonsense. He completely underestimated it. *We* completely underestimated it. To a certain extent, my father is a typical case of a baptized Jew who was fully assimilated, who couldn’t imagine that he wouldn’t be accepted as assimilated by the other side. That was a very widespread error.”²⁶

This is why even those who opposed Hitler could agree with the Aryanization of the Protestant church — an attitude that today we find completely stupefying.

Nazi Race Laws: Racial Classification and the Christian Churches

According to Nazi race laws, *mischlings*, or people of “mixed race,” were not Aryans, and therefore could not be German Christians, but instead were categorized as “non-Aryan Christians” or “non-Mosaic” Jews. Racially determined “mixtures” were classified according to degree: people with one Jewish parent were “first degree mixtures,” or “half-Jews;” people with one Jewish grandparent were “second-degree mixtures,” or “quarter-Jews.”²⁷ “Surprising as it might sound,” writes historian Deborah Hertz, “in ... 1933, the definition of who was a non-Aryan was actually broader than it became in 1935.”²⁸ Under the Nuremberg laws, passed in

September 1935, a “non-Aryan” was a person with at least one Jewish parent or grandparent: “all of the quarter Jews and some of the half Jews were removed from the non-Aryan category and declared to be functionally Aryans.”²⁹ A “full Jew” was a person with three to four Jewish grandparents or a person with two Jewish grandparents who was married to a “full Jew” or a member of the Judaic faith. Even a baptized Christian who fell within these two categories was classified as a “full Jew.”

Since the eighteenth century, many Jews had been converting to Christianity — both Protestantism and Catholicism — throughout Europe, and especially in Germany, where the rate of intermarriage was the highest.³⁰ In 1876, Jews, like any German citizen, could opt out of the Jewish community without joining another one, i.e. without conversion.³¹ Hertz writes,

In April 1933 no one knew how many Germans of Jewish descent there were. In 1933, the size of the official Jewish community was just over half a million, most of them full Jews by descent. Eventually it became clear that there were almost as many non-Aryan Christians as there were affiliated Jews. The upshot was that close to a million Germans could be labeled with some degree of Jewishness.³²

According to historian Niall Ferguson, “By the later 1920s, nearly one in every three marriages involving a German Jew was to a Gentile. The rate rose as high as one in two in some big cities.”³³ Ferguson presents statistics on this population in his book *The War of the Worlds*, the percentage of mixed marriages in Germany was 35.1%, and in Hamburg, it was 49.1%. In Pressburg/Posen/Poznan, the rate was 39.2%, whereas in Poland itself it was only 0.2%. Another German city with a large Jewish population, now in the Ukraine, for comparison, was Lemberg/Lvov/Lwow, with 0.5%.³⁴ The high level of Jewish assimilation in Germany, especially in Posen and Hamburg, may be indicative also of a high level of *Philo-Semitism* in Germany although this theory has not been studied in the shadow of the Holocaust. For all that, the number of Jews in Germany, according to Ferguson, was fewer than 503,000 in 1933 — 0.76 of the total population.³⁵

In 1933, the Nazi regime listed 500,000 religiously observant Jews, 50,000 nonreligious “full Jews,” 200,000 “half-Jews,” and 100,000 “quarter-Jews.” But some church estimates put the number of Jewish Christians at around 1.5 million. Of these, 88% were Protestant.³⁶

Most were highly assimilated professionals and middle class shopkeepers in urban centers, like my family, which owned a butcher shop in Hamburg.

Barnett quotes a delegate to the Confessing Church synod in Steglitz in 1935, soon after the passage of the Nuremberg laws, who argued: “A Jew does not become a German through baptism and belief,” and the delegate “advised his colleagues to leave difficult questions like that of intermarriage between baptized Jews and Christians ... up to the Nazi state.”³⁷ Many Christians of Jewish descent were very positive about assimilation. Herz focuses on Victor Klemperer, the son of a Reform rabbi who married a Christian of Jewish descent. He “was proud to be a German and disdained his Jewish heritage, even equating Zionism with Nazism as a racist regime.” Klemperer wrote, “until 1933, and for a good century before that, the German Jews

were entirely German and nothing else. Proof: the thousands upon thousands of ‘half’ and ‘quarter’ Jews. Jews and Germans lived and worked together in all spheres of life.”³⁸

Beginning in 1933, most Protestant clergy willingly accepted Hitler's racist views. It was this noxious racist brew, theologian Walter Kaiser writes, “that led to the infamous Sport Palace demonstration of Berlin German Christians on November 13, 1933.” Kaiser reminds his readers that it was there that, “the district chairman, R. Krause, demanded ‘...liberation from the Old Testament with its Jewish money morality, [and] from the stories of livestock handlers and pimps.’”³⁹ And it is in that event that Kaiser locates the launching of the battle against the Old Testament in pre-World War II Germany, a battle which “eventually led to the atrocities against the Jews and to [the] silencing of the OT message in the German church.”⁴⁰

The Nazi regime issued the Edict of April 1933 called the “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service.” Many Protestant clergy consequently agreed with the Nazi policy and chose to eject all pastors who had Jewish parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents. These men had been baptized and raised in the church, and were employed by it. They had never thought of themselves as anything but Evangelical Protestants.⁴¹ They had not attended synagogue and, in many cases, they had never celebrated the Jewish holidays. They were Christians and identified themselves that way. The Church voluntarily “Aryanized” itself, immediately firing all pastors of Jewish descent in 1933; by 1935, all congregants of Jewish descent were expelled.

It is shocking that these clergy were not frightened into submission to the Nazi policy and they were not ordered to make these changes. The self-governing clergy simply voted to support Hitler's policies because they agreed with them concerning the employment of non-Aryans in their institutions.⁴² “The policy guidelines” of the Nazi regime from 1935-1945 “were to allow the quarter Jews to leave the Jewish category, and to temporarily protect the half Jews from deportation.”⁴³ However, “the reprieve for the latter was only temporary.” Near the end of the war, “they too were slated for deportation” as evidenced from the records of Theresienstadt, where, in 1945, 36% of the prisoners were “non-Mosaic” Jews — that is, Christians.⁴⁴

In a striking description of a minor event in the history of the Holocaust, Barnett reveals how even the seemingly most unimportant actions have enormous and lasting consequences. Barnett reports,

In September 1935, Marga Meusel, together with Heinrich Vogel, Bonhoeffer, Martin Albertz, and Franz Hildebrandt (a Jewish Christian vicar in the Confessing Church who subsequently emigrated to England) tried to put the “Jewish question” on the agenda of the Prussian Confessing Church synod held in Berlin-Steglitz. They were thwarted, not just by conservatives like Bavarian Bishop Meiser but by Westphalian Confessing Church leader Karl Koch, who threatened to leave the synod if the issue of the Jews was brought up.

In its final statement, the Steglitz Synod issued a mild declaration criticizing the Nuremberg racial laws passed two weeks earlier. The wording, declared Martin Niemöller, “was very wanting or less than wanting minimum” of what needed to

be said. Indeed, among the sectors of the church, the reaction to the racial laws was one of relief: With clear regulations established, people reasoned, the individual terrorist activities of the SA would come to an end (they did not consider that these were being replaced by state terrorism). Among those affected by the comprehensive laws passed at Nuremberg, there was also some relief, if for a different reason. The Nuremberg laws and the regulations for their implementation, wrote Jochen Klepper in his diary, “will seem atrocious in later eras — to us, in the expectation of something much more horrible, they seemed mild.”⁴⁵

Barnett points out that Hitler and other leading Nazis, despite their opportunist claims to the contrary, “were hardly religious,” but used Luther’s anti-Semitic writings” with scarcely a word of protest or contradiction from the leaders of the Protestant Church.”⁴⁶

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had written, “In that I defend myself against Judaism, I am fighting for the work of the Lord” and a number of church leaders agreed that the fight against the Jews was, indeed, a defense of Christianity. ... A number of church leaders, even within the church opposition to Nazism, felt that the attempt to ‘put the Jews in their place’ was both an understandable goal and a legitimate one.”⁴⁷

Approximately 2,000 racial laws were passed during the course of the Third Reich, 1,219 of them before *Kristallnacht* — November 8-9, 1938.⁴⁸ It is in this context that many Jews hoped that conversion “would exempt them from racial restrictions.”⁴⁹ According to Barnett, “the number of Jews who converted to Protestantism jumped from 241 in 1932 to 933 in 1933 (in the Catholic Church, 89 converted in 1932, compared with 304 in 1933). Until 1939, when baptism of “non-Aryans” was forbidden by the state, around 300 Jews converted to Protestantism each year.”⁵⁰ Many German Jews and “New (Jewish) Christians,”

[B]ewildered at the situation in which they found themselves, stubbornly asserted their own nationalism — as if, once the Nazis could be convinced of Jewish patriotism, “everything would be all right.” These assimilated Jews, through their assertions of national loyalty, tried to distance themselves from the Jewish community. Jewish men took their World War I medals or baptismal certificates to the local Nazi headquarters to convince Nazi bureaucrats of their national loyalty. Some took initial comfort in the illusion that the Nazi racial laws would affect only “full Jews.” And, of course, “full Jews” were affected hardest and earliest by the racial laws, which, by the end of 1933, had removed them from all civil service positions and barred them from the universities.

“For the mainstream Protestant church, and even within most of the Confessing church, the question of church advocacy on behalf of non-Christian Jews did not even arise,” Barnett sadly acknowledges. She continues,

Even Martin Niemöller’s opposition to the “Aryan paragraph” reflected primarily a concern for church independence. Niemöller’s 1933 attack on the “Aryan paragraph” was hardly a defense of those affected by it. “Whether it’s congenial to us or not,” he wrote, “we have to recognize the converted Jews as fully entitled members through the Holy Spirit. ... This recognition demands of us a high measure of self-discipline as a people who have had a great deal to bear under the influence of the Jewish people, so that the wish to be freed from this demand is understandable.”⁵¹

Christian resentment of Jewish exceptionalism rings out even among those opposed to the Nazis. Barnett writes of others in the Confessing Church, like Lutheran pastor Hans Asmussen, “who, while seeking to keep the church free of state interference, actually defended the racial laws:”

Our racial laws draw a firm and unbridgeable dividing wall between Jews and non-Jews. The Jews did that long ago, and, through that, have kept their race pure. That's what we want, too. But what the Jew holds for correct when he does it, he sees an injustice against him when others do it. ... We want nothing to do with the Jewish race. ... The Jews may keep their religion as they wish. ... They live in our land, and we are the masters in our land and want to remain so.

“Asmussen and Niemöller would rue such statements later,” Barnett points out.

In the course of the Third Reich, both men came to recognize how such prejudices fed the swell of Nazi terror against the Jews. But the effect of such statements in the early years of Nazism was to minimize the ominous significance of the racial laws and the actual violence against Jews. Having aligned themselves with anti-Semitic ideology, many Christians were unable to break out of this cycle of rationalization.⁵²

The experience of one “non-Aryan” pastor, Hans Ehrenberg, for whom, “the pressure to resign only added to his terrible loneliness as a Jewish Christian in Nazi Germany.” When the infamous anti-Semitic paper *Der Stürmer* attacked him in 1937, Ehrenberg wrote a long letter to his fellow Confessing pastors, pleading for their support:

What do I need now? To talk things out, otherwise I will be isolated, practically speaking. Discussion, because in this simple way the service [that is, his service to the church] can be maintained. ... I need neither advice nor outside help. But I need Christian brothers who show that they aren't only looking out for their own way. ... I need room, meant here totally externally, room for me to live, for my marriage, the raising of my children in the family. ... I can hardly live now in one single place without gasping for breath.

But Westphalian church leader Koch, Barnett continues, “despite pleas from Ehrenberg and from his supporters in the parish, told the besieged pastor that there was no other way out: He would have to resign his pastorate.”

In a reply to Koch before his resignation, Ehrenberg wrote poignantly: “I don't know what I still have to go through. But I am comforted that there is no death — and haven't I been dying in my pastorate for a long time now?”⁵³

Theologically and politically, the fates of Christians and Jews were bound together. But the tendency of most Germans, including those within the church, was to put an even greater distance between themselves and the Jews. Left to themselves, Jewish Christians formed their own groups. The Jewish Christian pastors founded the Paulusbund; in 1936 the “Reich Association of Non-Aryan Christians” was founded and grew quickly to 80,000 members.⁵⁴

The increasingly strict racial laws imprisoned Jews in their isolation. This paralyzed some and drove others to suicide. In 1942, Jochen Klepper noted the number of suicides in Berlin; the Jews, he wrote, had to wait “one week and a half for a fu-

neral: the overload due to the 20 to 30 Jewish suicides per day, of which the German people, because of the isolation of the Jews, learn nothing.⁵⁵

The Confessing Church and the Jewish Jesus

When these policies were enacted, some evangelicals protested Nazi policy and seceded from the official church. Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote the “Barmen Declaration” to protest the state’s new policies and formed what became known as the “Confessing Church.” This declaration, however, failed to address explicitly the racial threat to all Jews. The anti-Semitic equivocation of the Confessing Church crippled whatever effectiveness its protest against Nazi racial policies might have had among Evangelicals. Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim wrote in 1974,

Even now I find it hard to believe that [Dietrich Bonhoeffer] should have confined his attack on Nazi Aryan legislation to its application to converted Jews; and I find it even harder to believe that these words were written by Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany in response to Nazi anti-Semitism.

He then quotes Bonhoeffer, who wrote,

Now the measures of the state toward Judaism in addition stand in quite special context for the church. The church of Christ has never lost sight of the thought that the “chosen people,” who nailed the redeemer of the world to the cross, must bear the curse for its action through a long history of suffering.⁵⁶

Fackenheim was aware that, later, Bonhoeffer regretted the stance he took in 1933, acknowledging that he had written in 1940 that the church “was silent when she should have cried out because the blood of the innocent was crying aloud to heaven ... she is guilty of the deaths of the weakest and most defenseless brothers of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁷ Yet Fackenheim cries out,

But did he ever repudiate a millennial Christian tradition, and seek a bond (even if only in his own mind) with “Jews faithful to their own faith,” because, and not in spite of, their faithfulness? How different Bonhoeffer’s struggle would have been if he had repudiated the “Christian tradition of the curse” from the start! How different would Jewish fate have been in our time had his whole church repudiated it!⁵⁸

Eric Metaxas vindicates Bonhoeffer against these claims in his extraordinary new biography, subtitled *A Righteous Gentile vs. the Third Reich*. Metaxas tells the story in the section of the book entitled “*Kristallnacht*, 9.11.38.” He writes,

Bonhoeffer was in the far eastern wilds of Pomerania when these events began. ... It was only later the next day that he heard what had happened across Germany. In a conversation about it with his ordinands the next day, someone put forth the accepted theory about the “curse” upon the Jews. The young ordinands did not condone what had happened and were genuinely upset about it, but they quite seriously suggested that the reason for the evils must be the “curse” that the Jews bore for rejecting Christ. Bonhoeffer knew the young men were neither hateful nor anti-Semitic, but he firmly refuted their interpretation. They were in error.

Metaxas continues, revealing that

In his Bible that day or the next, Bonhoeffer was reading Psalm 74. This was the text he happened to be meditating upon. What he read startled him, and with his

pencil he put a vertical line in the margin to mark it, with an exclamation point next to the line. He also underlined the second half of verse 8: ... "They have burned all of God's houses in the land." Next to the verse he wrote: "9.11.38."

Metaxas explains,

Bonhoeffer saw this as an example of God speaking to him, and to the Christians in Germany. God was telling him something through his Word that day, and as he meditated and prayed, Bonhoeffer realized that the synagogues that had been burned in Germany were God's own. This was when Bonhoeffer most clearly saw the connection: to lift one's hand against the Jews was to lift one's hand against God himself. The Nazis were attacking God by attacking his people. The Jews in Germany were not only not God's enemies, they were his beloved children. Quite literally, this was a revelation.

To substantiate this new evidence, Metaxas writes,

In the circular letter to the Finkenwalde community a few days afterward, Bonhoeffer reflected on this, and to make his bold point, he added other verses into the mix: "I have lately been thinking a great deal about Psalm 74, Zech. 2:8 and Rom. 9:4f. and 11:11-5. That leads us to very earnest prayer."

"Taken all together," Metaxas continues,

[Bonhoeffer] was preaching a provocative sermon. The verse in Zechariah is: "For thus said the LORD of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye" (ESV). The verses in Romans 9 are: "They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen" (ESV). And in Romans 11: "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them" (ESV).

Bonhoeffer's commitment to the continuity of the Old Testament and the New, explains his realization that the Jewish people are beloved of God. Metaxas continues his argument:

Bonhoeffer was using the words of Jews — David, Zechariah, and Paul — to make the point that the Jews are God's people, and that the Messiah came from them and came for them first. He had never abandoned them, but longed to reach those who were the "apple of His eye." If Christianity has come to the Gentiles, it came in some large part so that the Jews could receive their Messiah. Bonhoeffer was identifying the evil done to the Jews as an evil done to God and God's people, but he was not taking that next theological leap to suggest that Christians were not meant to take the gospel of Christ to the Jews. On the contrary, he stood against this idea by quoting these verses, and he stood against the Nazis who had forbidden Jews from being a part of the German church.

Warming to his vindication of Bonhoeffer, Metaxas writes:

For Bonhoeffer to take such a theological stand on the subject of the Jews was exceedingly rare. But he knew that God had spoken to him that morning. Bethge said that Bonhoeffer never wrote anything about contemporary events in his Bible. This was the only time that he had done so.

Turning to one of Bonhoeffer's friends to help us to understand the intellectual process that he was going through, Metaxas relates:

Hans-Werner Jensen recalled that Bonhoeffer's awareness of what the Jews were going through immediately following *Kristallnacht* caused him to be "driven by a great inner restlessness, a holy anger ... During those ugly days we learned to understand — not just human revenge, but the prayer of the so-called psalms of vengeance which gave over to God alone the case of the innocent, 'for his name's sake.' It was not apathy and passiveness which Dietrich Bonhoefer [*sic*] derived from them, but for him prayer was the display of the strongest possible activity."

Metaxas concludes this chapter of the book by writing:

Throughout 1938, the inability of the Confessing Church's leaders to be bold and stand firm disheartened Bonhoeffer, not least because the pastors were not receiving the support they desperately needed. He wrote in his Advent letter that year:

I'm not quite sure how, we have largely got into a way of thinking which is positively dangerous. We think that we are acting particularly responsibly if every other week we take another look at the question whether the way on which we have set out is the right one. It is particularly noticeable that such a "responsible reappraisal" always begins the moment serious difficulties appear. We then speak as though we no longer had "a proper joy and certainty" about this way, or, still worse, as though God and his Word were no longer as clearly present with us as they used to be. In all this we are ultimately trying to get round what the New Testament calls "patience" and "testing." Paul, at any rate, did not begin to reflect whether his way was the right one when opposition and suffering threatened, nor did Luther. They were both quite certain and glad that they should remain disciples and followers of their Lord. Dear brethren, our real trouble is no doubt about the way upon which we have set out, but our failure to be patient, to keep quiet. We still cannot imagine that today God really doesn't want anything new for us, but simply to prove us in the old way. That is too petty, too monotonous, too undemanding for us. And we simply cannot be constant with the fact that God's cause is not always the successful one, that we really could be "unsuccessful": and yet be on the right road. But this is where we find out whether we have begun in faith or in a burst of enthusiasm.⁵⁹

It was at this time that Metaxas believes that Bonhoeffer realized that the "Confessing Church's fight was over."⁶⁰ Bonhoeffer's momentous decision to join the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler, however, still lay ahead. Nevertheless, it is clear that Metaxas is making his case to the Jewish community that their view of Bonhoeffer must be amended in light of the new evidence that he has provided. Bonhoeffer must be recognized as a righteous gentile, and to take his place among those who gave their lives because of their solidarity with the Jewish people.

Because the leaders of the Confessing Church never protested against the anti-Jewish policies

of the regime, focusing instead only on Jewish Christians, their actions have been repudiated by Jews and, following the war, by the repentant members of the Confessing Church itself. As it was, in Germany, the Evangelical Church was “Aryanized” with essentially no protest against its racial policies.

Theresienstadt: German Jews and German Jewish Christians

The data on Theresienstadt provides a snapshot of the community there. While we cannot extrapolate exact numbers for all of the camps from the case of Theresienstadt, the numbers there are illustrative. At Theresienstadt, the number of “non-Jewish Jews” increased over the years. However, no statistical information is available until October 1943. At that time, the share of Christians amounted to approximately nine percent of the total population, while the number of those who claimed adherence to no religious affiliation numbered six percent. Beginning in December 1943, there are more precise figures broken down into “Mosaic” (Jewish) and “Non-Mosaic” (Christians of Jewish descent).⁶¹ By April 24, 1945, the number of Jews equaled 63% of the total population, and the number of Christians of Jewish descent numbered 36.6%.

“Mosaic” and “non-Mosaic” Jews in Theresienstadt

Religion	“Mosaic”	Percentage	“Non-Mosaic”	Percentage
October 1943				9%
December 1943	30,480	87.9%	3,925	12.1%
May 1944	23,529	84.2%	4,193	15.8%
December 1944	8,346	72.1%	3,112	27.9%
April 20 1945	11,104	63.4%	3,619	36.6%

The non-Jewish Christians were distributed in the following way during those years:⁶²

“Non-Mosaic” Groups in Theresienstadt

Religion	Catholic	Protestant	Sects	No Confession	Not Stated
October 1943* ⁶³	9%	*	*	*	6%
December 1943	1,321	830	207	1,567	250
May 1944	1,439	1,084	195	1,475	255
December 1944	943	1,198	139	832	110
April 20, 1945	2,014	1,808	368	2,004	117

Professor Kai Kjaer-Hansen presented a short paper at the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism conference at Lake Balaton in Hungary in 2007. This presentation brought home for me the feeling of what it was like at Theresienstadt for both Jews and non-Jews. I quote his presentation in its entirety to share it with Holocaust scholars.

This evening we are going to a place about 40 miles north of Prague, to Theresienstadt in what was then Czechoslovakia, to the town that Hitler “had donated to

the Jews" and which in Nazi propaganda was described as a "spa town" where elderly Jews could "retire." From the end of 1941 to the beginning of 1945, more than 140,000 Jews were sent to this ghetto, which for many, about 88,000, became a transit camp to the death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. Approximately 33,000 died in this ghetto. When it was all over and the ghetto had been liberated on May 8, 1945, there were about 19,000 survivors.

Theresienstadt was governed by a council of Jewish elders; but although there was a certain degree of self-management, it did not mean that they had freedom to do as they pleased; it meant that they were expected to make things work and to carry out the German orders with all the compromises that involved for the council itself.⁶⁴

Among those who died in Theresienstadt, or were deported from Theresienstadt to the death camp Auschwitz or survived the horrors in Theresienstadt, were individuals who were Christians of Jewish descent. It is tempting today to call them "Messianic Jews", but this would not correspond with their self-perception. Like most other Jews in Germany they saw themselves as Germans; unlike most other German Jews they were Jews who had embraced the Christian faith, some by conviction, others for pragmatic reasons. In plain words, and whether or not we like to hear it: the Jewish identity Isaac Lichtenstein or Lucky had fought for 50 years before was quite beyond the horizon of these Christian Jews. But in Theresienstadt they shared the fate of "Mosaic" Jews. In the eyes of the Nazis, their Christian faith did not obliterate their Jewishness.

Hans Werner Hirschberg

I will begin with Hans Werner Hirschberg, who had been a judge in Berlin. He arrived at Theresienstadt on February 10, 1944, and survived the horrors. We have at least two written accounts from him. After the liberation Hirschberg writes in the Romanian magazine *Prietenul*, which had been launched by Isaac Feinstein, "that the light of the gospel shone brightly in Theresienstadt. One tenth of the Jews who had been interned there belonged to a Christian confession. Some were Protestants, some Catholics. Among these Jews, there was a group of Evangelical Jewish Christians from Holland, four hundred in number that distinguished themselves. They even had a Jewish Christian pastor with them." The person he refers to is Dominé Enker, who came to Theresienstadt in September 1944.

Hirschberg also writes: "The Catholic and Evangelical Jews lived together as brethren in harmony. In Theresienstadt the words of Jesus, that we may all be one, became reality ... and we prayed publicly for Pastor [Martin] Niemöller and other Christians who were in concentration camps. I think that we were the only people who really had freedom to do that. No one could commit us to a concentration camp, for we were already in a concentration camp."

Hirschberg concludes his account with the following words: "Many of our 'church members' had, although they had been baptized, never really considered being followers of Jesus until they came to Theresienstadt. But here, under the influence of God's word, many of them were truly converted. Jews who had been Christians in name only became true Christians.

Many Mosaic Jews and Jews who had no faith whatsoever found Jesus and were saved in Theresienstadt.

I am one of the few survivors from the concentration camp in Theresienstadt. Most of my brothers went home to be with the Lord. But my Saviour saved me out of this camp so that I might proclaim the wonderful things that He performed among those who were in 'the valley of the shadow of death.'"

Some will probably be surprised at Hirschberg's statement that one tenth of the people in Theresienstadt were Christian Jews. And it does seem to be an understatement if the whole period is considered. On April 20, 1945, more than 36 percent were "non-Mosaic" Jews. To this I just want to say that it cannot be deduced that there were 600,000 Jewish Christians among the 6 million Jews that were killed during the Holocaust. But there was a considerable number of Christians of Jewish descent — some mention a six-figure number. Their certificate of baptism could not save them from the gas ovens.

Arthur Goldschmidt — the founder of the evangelical congregation

Arthur Goldschmidt's parents had converted to Christianity in 1858. After Goldschmidt, born in 1873, had to resign his post as a judge in Hamburg in 1933, he devoted himself to his hobby as a painter. His wife Kitty, who was a baptized Jew, died in June 1942. The Protestant clergyman in the town refused to bury her in the churchyard as Mrs. Goldschmidt was not an "Aryan." One month later Goldschmidt was deported to Theresienstadt. Here he founded an evangelical congregation where he preached and administered pastoral care. He survived in the ghetto. Before his death on February 9, 1947, he wrote down an account of the evangelical congregation in Theresienstadt. Here are a few glimpses from the account that was published in 1948.

On the first Sunday in the ghetto, Goldschmidt and another man get together in an attic and read the New Testament which he has brought. The word gets about, and others join them the following Sundays. No more than twenty persons can assemble without permission. "What was I to do?" He realizes that the administration was not likely to appreciate the formation of a Christian congregation in a Jewish town, and without the consent of the Jewish council of elders he could not proceed.

Goldschmidt continues: "So I turned, nonetheless, to Mr. Edelstein, who was then the leader of the Jewish council, and described the state of affairs to him. When he was informed of the fact that an evangelical congregation had already been founded, he was astonished but also full of understanding. The good God is ultimately the same, and to him, Edelstein, it is the same in which way he is honoured." Both sides realize that the room where the Mosaic Jews worship cannot be used.

On October 18, 1942, they get the first and semi-official recognition of the congregation as a room with electrical light, used as a variety theatre and a lecture hall, is made available for them by the council of elders. And the congregation grows. Between 150 and 200 attend the services, at the festivals there are even more. It is an extremely mixed congregation; there are, for example, Lutherans, members of the Reformed Church, Anglicans, Hussites, Remonstrants, Brethren, and others. Non Christians were welcome but could not receive Communion.

In the summer of 1943 a split threatens the congregation but it was prevented, another matter that I cannot go into here.

Goldschmidt says about the relationship between Mosaic and Christian Jews that the attitude to those who had been baptized as infants was "neutral." It was a different matter with those who had been baptized as adults. They were regarded as "backsliders, renegades and traitors." The idea that someone should have embraced Christianity out of conviction and not for pragmatic reasons seemed to be absolutely unthinkable. But this also needs to be said: Communion, consisting of bread and tea with sugar, was also administered to sick Christian Jews in infirmaries and sickrooms. Goldschmidt writes: "Apart from a few improper remarks, which were soon discouraged with a word of admonition, the other patients of Jewish persuasion observed a pious quietness."

Goldschmidt does not hide that, from time to time, there were some difficulties with

the council of elders. But the following words are nevertheless remarkable: "In retrospect it must be admitted that this administration of what was intended as a pure Jewish society, which naturally would see a Christian congregation as a foreign body, in general has been very obliging." Here is an example: Christian German Jews cannot celebrate Christmas without a Christmas tree, which is difficult to come by. Again in Goldschmidt's words: "Finally the SS permitted us to have a small tree, which would be decorated by the women; not even candles, a much desired rarity donated from all sides, were missing." But then listen to how Goldschmidt continues: "The last year the Christmas tree was cynically forbidden by the SS man who had to make the decision. But then, fortunately, the Jewish administration saw to it that an artificial tree with inserted branches and with multicoloured electrical lamps was made for the service!" I wonder if it was the Hanukkah bush?

"And what is more," Goldschmidt continues, "the administration, or more correctly the leader of the Jewish council, Dr. Marmelstein, even organized a gala performance for the Christian children with a children's choir singing Christmas carols, children performing a small fairytale play and a magician — a man in the camp that had been deprived of his profession — showed his tricks."

Death and "Ego sum resurrectio"

For the evangelical congregation the question of how to honour their dead in death became a pressing one. Mortality was high, not least during the first years. A crematorium, which could cope with 200 corpses a day, had been built. The coffins, 40-50 or more, were first placed in open air, later in a casemate hall. After a rabbi had performed the ceremony, the coffins were taken to the crematorium. I will let Goldschmidt tell about this:

"The Christians had doubts about this funeral after Jewish rites. They tried therefore to attain a dissociation from the Jewish funerals. To begin with it was argued again and again that there were technical difficulties, but from May 1943 the deceased Christians were laid out a half hour before the funeral ceremony; later a special hall was allowed for this. The attempts to fit out this hall to some extent with dignity were long futile. The request to have a large crucifix and the inscription 'Ego sum resurrectio' — 'I am the Resurrection' was finally made, but the commandant rejected it since a public exhibition of Christian symbols could not be permitted.

Not until the end was the hall put in a suitable condition and fitted out with a big crucifix, with that inscription, made by a sculptor. It also became possible to have the corpse carts and the coffins covered with a simple black cloth instead of a cloth with the David Star."

So in death these Christians of Jewish descent chose not to have the David Star on their coffins. Who dare, under these circumstances, throw the first stone? And perhaps it is throwing the first stone to ask the question: If Isaac Lichtenstein or Lucky had been there ... which hall would they have chosen for their burial ceremony? And which cloth to cover their coffin?⁶⁵

Jewish Evangelism in the Shadow of the Holocaust

Holocaust scholarship has generally avoided the story of these Christians, obscuring the fact that many of those Jews, perhaps as many as 10% in Germany, were actually professing Christians. From the Jewish perspective, Jewish conversion to Christianity is a betrayal that results from a worldly desire to find acceptance by Gentiles. And for Christians, in the shadow

of the Holocaust, Jewish evangelism has been repudiated as inappropriate, insensitive, and worse, anti-Semitic. The ambivalence of Christians about the Jewish people and Judaism has been further complicated by the creation and existence of the State of Israel. Today, the identity of Jews as a people, an ethnicity, has far transcended their religious practice, although lately there has been a resurgence of Orthodoxy, and in Israel, there is increasing Orthodox legal and political power to use religious law, rather than ethnicity, as the marker of Jewish identity.

Today, the religious diversity of Jewish practice would astound Jews who lived before the Second World War. Yet it is in this context that the story of Christians of Jewish descent must not be forgotten. This history serves as a powerful warning about the way that theology can be used in the service of power. The rebirth of Messianic Judaism in Israel and the West since 1967 is significantly different from the Hebrew Christianity of the pre-World War II era that aimed at the assimilation and the disappearance of the Jew into the universal Church. Culturally distinctive, Messianic Judaism's commitment to participating Jewish culture is rooted in a robust faith in the reliability of God's promises to the Jewish people as Jews. Representing a reformed ecclesiology that repudiates racial anti-Semitism and vindicates ethnic and multiculturalism and diversity in the Church, Messianic Judaism affirms the particular while at the same time proclaiming the universality of Christ's mission. The blessed hope of the Gospel is for the Jew and for the Gentile; it is a hope that transcends the political and transforms culture in the name of the God of Israel.

The equivocation of some of the Protestant leaders of the dissenting Confessing Church led, ultimately, not only to the death of many thousands of Christians of Jewish descent and Protestant dissenters during the years 1943-45 (after the majority of the Jewish victims of the Nazis had already been murdered) but also to the spiritual death of Protestantism as a moral and ethical voice in Europe. And while the Catholic Church — since Vatican II — has attempted to face the consequences of anti-Semitism, repudiating the charge of deicide against the Jewish people and the teaching of contempt, which taught that the Church had superseded Israel, the specter of "Replacement Theology" has resurfaced in the guise of "Fulfillment Theology" due to the absence of a political settlement of the Israel-Palestine Conflict.⁶⁶

III. A Way Forward: The Kingdom of God is not a Political Kingdom.

History has shown the evil that has resulted from the Christian doctrine of supersessionism, which postulated that the prophecies relating to eschatological Israel applied to the Church. Since Vatican II, the Catholic Church has reframed its theological claims relating to the Jewish people because of its realization that the charge of deicide against the Jewish people, the "teaching of contempt" (a theme and charge developed by Jules Isaac) and the sociology of anti-Semitism have had horrible historical consequences for the Church and for humanity. For the most part, Christians today have accepted a view of "two covenants" to dignify Judaism — Christianity's "elder" brother — as an older path of salvation. Yet this solution to the ecclesiastical and soteriological issues posed by the Gospel to Judaism has proved unsatis-

factory, for it undermines the universality of Christ's mission. Today, prophecy has emerged as the central theological problem for Protestants, and the theological debate among Christians about the legitimacy of the State of Israel and its relationship to the Bible has become central to the theological debate around the uses of the Old Testament in the New.

Since 1967, Christian Zionism has become the focus of theological attention among evangelicals with the theology of premillennial dispensationalism of particular concern. Anti-Zionist evangelical critics — focusing primarily upon Christian Zionist interpretations of prophecies relating to the Land, specifically those territories occupied by Israel as a result of the Six Day War as a fulfillment of prophecy — seek to undermine what they believe to be the basis of the Jewish claim to territory. These critics charge that Zionist claims are based upon a literal reading of Old Testament prophecy, and, as a result, have returned to a renewed focus on Christ as the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy relating to Israel. For Arab Christians, the Old Testament has become problematic because of the Arab-Israel Conflict. In Lebanon, for example, Christians are forbidden to mention the word “Israel” in their ministries and, therefore, avoid the Old Testament for political reasons. Moreover, this trend is growing, as liberation theologians have begun to eschew the Old Testament, reading only the New. Naim Ateek, an important Palestinian Liberation theologian writes, “Texts that reflect the violence of god or an exclusive theology of god, land, and people must be removed and substituted by texts that express the inclusive love of God for all people.”⁶⁷ Especially worrisome is the new evangelical campaign against Christian Zionism, which effectively equates the theological system known as premillennial dispensationalism with “Aryan” German Christian theology in order to undermine Christian support for Israel.⁶⁸

And so, only sixty-six years after the Holocaust, theology has become politicized, and once again, the Jewish people and Israel have become a theological problem for Christians. In this section, I, as a world historian, make the case that the historical sensibility of dispensationalism prevents a misreading of prophecy by accentuating the differences between this current dispensation, or era, and the past, as well as the prophesied future Millennial Kingdom. In this sense, the argument is that dispensationalism actually serves as a hermeneutical brake on the misuse of the Old Testament for political reasons.

However, before I can do this, I must state without qualification that the theology of the Nazi Reich is completely dissimilar to Christian Zionism. This accusation brings shame to the name of Christ and does a disservice to the Kingdom. Dispensationalists accept the entire Word of God as divinely inspired and inerrant. They do not read the New Testament without contextualizing it in the Old. They do not manipulate Scripture by removing Hebraisms. Dispensationalists fully affirm the equality of the Jew and the Gentile in the Church. In no way can dispensationalism be “blamed” for Christian support of Israel in the way that the theology of the Nazi era was instrumental in aryanizing Christ. Ethnicity and race are reflections of self-identity, identity that is rooted in the way that God created mankind.

In this section of my paper, I explore what theology can help us to understand about Jewish

identity. God's interactions with humanity have been historical, that is, they have taken place in the lives of particular persons, at particular times and in particular places. By losing sight of the historical nature of God's relationship with man, "confessional readings" of the word of God becomes ahistorical — an allegorization — creating reductionist, essentializing ideas about religions that help to transform revelation into an abstraction. Such interpretations of scripture rob history of meaning, making the "earthy-ness" of God's relationships with humanity through lived lives "parenthetical" to "salvation history." And this leads to a willingness to manipulate scripture itself in order to instrumentalize faith for political purposes.

Wolfhart Pannenberg's understanding of history as "the tension between promise and fulfillment" was, for me, the key for articulating the nexus between theology and history.⁶⁹ However, the critics of Pannenberg's foundationalism, i.e. his acceptance of the idea that what has happened in the past or present, that is, the event — reality — can be known, has led many theologians, historians, archeologists and philosophers away from reading the biblical text as history. The vast majority of scholars — including theologians — reject historical methodology for understanding Scripture. As a result of the doubts raised by the historicist method of biblical "higher criticism," many of today's seminarians, like their nineteenth century forbears, study a biblical record that they reject as historically unreliable, and that they therefore interpret in a postmodern paradigm, one that has deconstructed biblical history as mythological, and one that chillingly reveals the ahistorical *weltanschauung* of theological studies, a context that forgets the cataclysmic results of the rejection of biblical history by liberal theologians in the nineteenth century. "Reading behind the text" to find mythopoetic truth, the scripture is again today read increasingly as a completely ideological project. This skepticism undermines our faith in the historicity of the texts as they have come down to us, and the events that they tell.

The didactic case of Israel and the Church as told in the Bible is presented as a moral story, emphasizing promise and punishment, obedience and rebellion, hope and despair. Dispensationalism presents a theology of history, a meta-narrative written within a paradigm of hope, emphasizing continuity and promise through God's relationship with Israel and the Church.⁷⁰ Unlike the Augustinian view of the discontinuity between Israel the nation and the Israel of God, progressive dispensationalists focus on God's gracious faithfulness to humanity throughout the course of world history. The dispensationalist view of history — and especially its view of progressive revelation — provides us with a theology of history — and of hope — for our age. Vindicating the idea of dispensations as distinct historical periods in which God has interacted with mankind in different ways helps us to understand the way in which God desires us to act in this dispensation, or what Augustine himself called the "Sixth Day." Historians periodize, that is, divide chronological periods of time thematically by selecting distinctive aspects of an era in order to differentiate it from other periods, to analyze and interpret it. We are familiar with this notion in secular history, and we teach how historians have used this method in our courses on historiography. Premillennial Dispensationalism,

like other hermeneutical systems, uses the same method to analyze the historical narrative told in Scripture.

Jewish and Christian theologians, recognizing discrete historical periods suggested by the biblical texts, with some variations across a broad spectrum of theological commitments, historically accepted the theological notion of dispensations to analyze the philosophy of history undergirding the story told in the Bible. Jews and Christians who have accepted a literal understanding of the history transmitted in the *Tanakh* generally have agreed upon seven dispensations, although some theologians have named more. For our purposes, I will call them, after Augustine, The First Day: "Innocence," the Second Day, "Conscience," the Third Day, "Government," the Fourth Day, "Promise," The Fifth Day, "Law," The Six Day, "Nations," and the Seventh Day "Fulfillment." All three monotheistic religions have at their heart a historical sensibility, that is, the belief that God has acted in history and will again.

The idea of dispensations is of fundamental importance when studying the biblical understanding of God's action in history. Beyond simply disputing whether the scriptural accounts of events as historically reliable and authoritative, the dispensationalist idea that God worked in a unique manner in each age provides a hermeneutical barrier to literalism. That this hermeneutic is badly needed has become clearer and clearer as the Bible has been refracted through literalist readings of scripture, the phenomenon scholars have termed "fundamentalism." An ahistorical hermeneutic approach to revelation and scripture justifies apocalypticism in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim thinking today. However, premillennial dispensationalism is not literalist in this sense. It understands the Bible as portraying the work of God in history in different ways in different eras. In the 1980s, George Marsden and Scott Appleby began a project to analyze fundamentalisms across the religious landscape.⁷¹ However, their approach was flawed because they misunderstood the Christian fundamentalism that they postulated as the model for their analysis of non-Christian fundamentalism. They confused dispensationalism with literalism because of the Christian fundamentalist commitment to the inerrancy of scripture. They failed to take into account the philosophy of history at the core of the concept of dispensations.

Scholars writing about Islamic literalism justifying jihad have argued that the same hermeneutic has increasingly characterized the approach of some "fundamentalist" Orthodox Jews and Christian Zionists. And sadly, it is true that some Orthodox Jews and some American Christians have taken to seeing the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, as the Philistines and Canaanites of Joshua's time, which is actually the position of some Palestinian nationalists.⁷² Conversely, some Christians and Muslims see Christian Zionism as the greatest cause of war in the Middle East. Some religious Zionists have called for a war of expulsion or even the extermination of the Palestinians living in Israel on the basis of a literal application of the commandments relating to conquest of the land contained in the Book of Joshua. Yet, according to dispensationalism, the holy war, or *herm*, in the *Tanakh* is clearly not permissible during this Age. The rules and ethics of just warfare in our current age are entirely different from the de-

struction that the Lord had called upon Israel to execute for His name's sake at the end of the four hundred year exile of the Israelites in Egypt, when, according to the Bible, the time of judgment had come upon the depraved peoples inhabiting Canaan, as all Jewish, Christian, and Muslims believe. Using the Bible as a pretext for ethnic cleansing is wrong, just as it is wrong to reject the legitimacy of the State of Israel based on the conditionality of the Mosaic Covenant. But this has nothing to do with dispensationalism.

Indeed, the State of Israel was not founded upon biblical grounds. Although nineteenth century Christian Zionists believed that what became known as Palestine during the Mandate period was the Jewish homeland, they also believed that it was wrongfully taken from them by Rome, and that it would ultimately be restored to the Jewish people. Biblical Zionism was founded upon nineteenth and twentieth century concepts of human rights, nationalism, and international law concerning war, conquest of territory, and population exchange. Zionism was a secular movement, opposed by Orthodox Jews, who believed that only God could restore the Jewish Nation through His Messiah. Although Zionists of that era, both Jewish and Christian, were inspired by the Bible and the historical record of the Jewish people, their political policies were grounded and articulated, in the realities of European international law, nationalism, and racial anti-Semitism. The opportunities availed to Jews during the Ottoman period, dating as far back as 1492, when the Ottomans invited those fleeing from the Inquisition and *Reconquista* in Spain to settle in their dominions, had made Palestine a Jewish refuge for four centuries.⁷³ History, and not the Bible, made it a destination for the secular Jewish Zionists coming primarily from Russia before the First World War.⁷⁴

The establishment of the modern State of Israel and the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948 lately have led to an evangelical Christian critique of dispensationalism, which they identify as the theology that undergirds Christian Zionism. The Bible itself again has become problematic for these Christians, due to the social injustices and moral compromises of Israeli policy which are clearly at odds with biblical teachings regarding the foreigner and the stranger living in Israel. These critics focus on theology without paying attention to the failures of statecraft on the parts of Israel, the international community and Israel's Arab neighbors.

Although dispensationalists believe, on the basis of prophetic texts in the Old Testament, that the Jewish people would be regathered in the Land of Israel before the Second Coming, they did not propose that political action would bring in the eschaton; far from it, they believed that the Jewish people are regathered in this age of history in a state of unbelief. The real life consequences of politics and wars have proven problematic for all students of the Bible. The injustices that Palestinian Arabs have suffered as a result of modern warfare are lamentable, but they result from decisions made by their political leadership to support the losers in both World Wars and their failure to establish good government for their own people.

In this age, Israel, like all other nations, is fallen. The Zionists of today all too often overlook this fundamental teaching of dispensationalism. And, increasingly, the result has been that the Bible itself has come under attack in this context. For example the archeological quest

for evidence of Israelite history, especially after 1967, has become politicized and deconstructed as a rationale for Jewish conquest and occupation of Palestinian lands. Biblical “minimalists” now refute the entire biblical record of the patriarchal period, including the revelation at Sinai, the conquest of Canaan, and the existence of the Israelite monarchy, which they argue are mere fabrications created during the Babylonian Exile of the Israelites to justify the return to the “Promised Land” and the reestablishment of the Davidic Kingdom — a kingdom which existed six centuries before Christ. The political implications of the truth of such claims led some post-Zionist critics of Israel to challenge the right of the Jewish people to political sovereignty and even to their own identity.⁷⁵

Israeli policies regarding the settlement movement in the West Bank and Gaza have exacerbated this attack. Evangelical Christians have joined Muslim radicals in identifying Christian Zionism as the greatest evil in the Middle East because of Christian support for Israel and its policies in the West Bank.⁷⁶ In particular, dispensationalism has been rejected as romanticist, historicist, and racist, and has been derided as the basis for evangelical Christian political support for Israel.⁷⁷ Hamas, picking up this criticism from evangelical Palestinian Christians, has itself identified Christian Zionism as Enemy Number 1 — an opinion increasingly echoed by Protestant and Catholic supporters of the Palestinians.⁷⁸

Indeed, dispensationalism provides insights that would make Christian support of Israel more circumspect if properly understood. The idea of progressive dispensations enables the historian to locate Jewish Christians, whose story has not been told as an integral aspect of either Christian history or what we might call secular history into the history of the nations during what has also been called the Age of Grace, when all humanity is privileged with the opportunity to become followers of the God of Israel (Ephesians 3:6; Acts 15:6-29). Furthermore, it repudiates, rather than supports the “two covenant” idea taught by some Christian Zionists. This view is a wrong-headed and unsuccessful attempt to show respect for the Jewish people in light of the Holocaust and to avoid Jewish suspicions of Christian evangelism. It also serves to repudiate the form of Messianic Judaism that teaches mandatory Torah observance. Neither of these teachings is a premillennial dispensationalist idea, because in the Church Age, the *ecclesia* is drawn out of the nations — the Jewish nation and the other nations of the world. Thus, the understanding of the “Church Age” from a dispensational viewpoint is extremely helpful, for it points to the ongoing historical reality of the Jewish people during the Sixth Dispensation — the “Age of the Nations.” The existence of the Jewish people is the *sine qua non* of the Church. Without them, the Church cannot exist.

Thus, Zionism has nothing to do with dispensationalism, except insofar as it teaches that God still has a purpose and a plan for the Jewish people. God has not forsaken them. Their priestly role in the future will be to serve the nations in the worship of God in the Millennial Kingdom. Misbegotten Evangelical criticism of dispensationalism is unwarranted and dangerous. It bears striking comparison to the pre-World War II theology of the Protestant Church in Germany that gave rise to “German Christian” theology which led to the Aryanization of

Christ under the Nazi regime. Therefore, it is necessary to examine in more detail how the reading of the Old Testament prophecies became problematic in Church history.

IV. Christ and the Jewish People

In this Age, the Age of Grace, the Church is not a nation, and the nations are not the Church. The hermeneutical usefulness of the dispensations — periods marking the beginning of a particular way that God has worked universally in history among individuals and nations — underlines the importance of space and time, geography and event in revelation.⁷⁹ Each person, each event, each place, is drenched in meaning, because it is in space and time that God works.

God, in His sovereignty, has established diverse governments to rule the regions of the world, and has acted providentially for cultures and societies to remain distinctive, to preserve His purposes for each one, and to thwart the human drive for conquest and homogenization. He has established laws for the nations to restrain the evil that is in the hearts of every person, and to deny Satan total power on earth. Nevertheless, evil remains. Humankind has the capacity to recognize evil, and to battle it, based not only on Scripture, but also upon the grace that underlies the natural laws of human nature and the human conscience.

Injustice is not a mystery nor is it arbitrary: throughout the ages we have known and recognized justice as revealed in nature and in scripture. Justice is the highest purpose for government during the Age of the Nations, but redemption of the human race is impossible without God's intervention in historic time, in fulfillment of prophecy and His promises to Israel for His own name's sake. Today, the very concept of universal justice is under attack, threatening to undermine all order in international relations. Without values that determine right from wrong, there is no way to prevent the mighty from oppressing the weak. This brings us back to the Bible and Israel as exemplar to the nations.⁸⁰ Theologian Robert Saucy wrote,

The Old Testament prophets looked forward to a time when the Gentiles would participate in God's salvation on the same basis as Israel. But in their view, this did not eliminate a *particular* place for Israel (emphasis mine). The New Testament continuity of the promises and covenants undergirding Israel's role in God's program also suggests that the soteriological unity of Jew and Gentile (individuals) in Christ does not negate a special place for Israel in the future.

"But," Saucy asks, "if there is such a place of prominence in Israel's future, the question may be rightly asked, why? What purpose does the restoration and elevation of Israel to a distinct position among the nations serve in salvation history?" For this is the problem posed by prophecy. "Does God's particular work with one nation give that people a closer relationship to God and thus deny the spiritual unity of Jews and Gentiles?" In a profound passage he writes,

These kinds of questions lay dormant for much of church history. The majority of the church had little concern for Israel as a nation in the future plan of salvation history. ... Two events of recent history have called attention to the continued historical existence of the Jews and sparked renewed theological inquiry, namely, the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel. ... Does Israel as a national people still have meaning in the plan and purpose of God? If so, then Israel still bears some distinction from the other nations of the world. What is the nature of

that distinction, and what is its purpose?⁸¹

Christian animus against the Jewish people has been the tragic refrain of the Church Age. Yet God's plan for Israel is to serve the nations, by ministering to their need for relationship to Him. Echoing Jacques Maritain, Saucy asks, "Is it too much to say that even Israel's suffering at the hands of the nations has somehow served the salvation of the nations and will someday be recognized as such and thus contribute to Israel's grateful exaltation?"⁸² These are the correct theological questions to ask in light of the establishment of the State of Israel.

The didactic nature of scripture and history requires an example, bounded by space and time, not myths or allegories. The reality of history requires a concrete case study to illuminate the reality of all nations. Israel is privileged in the biblical account of history because narrative requires specificity: if God had revealed His will singly to each nation, each would consider their revelation without any sense of humility. God made "not a nation" into a nation to show His sovereignty over a people who would serve Him out of love as He loves each nation: Israel is to model, channel, and edify the faith of the nations so that each nation and every knee shall bow to the King. The eschatological role of Israel is to serve the nations in a priestly capacity in the Millennial Kingdom. Today the presence of the Jewish people among the nations reminds them of the commandment to love their neighbor.

Israel ... represents all mankind, in unity and scattering, in pride and sin and fall. God's judgment on his people is his judgment upon all the earth; and when the Lord has mercy on his people and gathers them again, the action adumbrates his blessing upon which he has promised to bestow on each and every nation. Israel then is the vanguard of the nations: her history is the centre and epitome of all history and the revelation of God's purposes for all mankind.⁸³

To elaborate on his point, Saucy cited Jewish scholar Umberto Cassuto, who wrote,

The general harmony in the history of the world is paralleled by the particular harmony prevailing in Israel's history. Seventy peoples on the one side, seventy sons and seventy families on the other. The people of Israel occupies in the plans of the Divine Providence a place resembling, on a small scale, that of all mankind; it is a small-scale world, a microcosm similar in form to the macrocosm.⁸⁴

Yet as Saucy makes clear, Israel's restoration is a necessary event, an event which will take place in history.

It is not that God simply chooses to reveal to all people his grace and power in the reestablishment and blessing of his people. The previous history of Israel makes it mandatory; God's reputation is at stake. Not to restore Israel would result in unfavorable revelation. God's holiness necessitated his judgment of rebellious Israel, yet this action rebounded against his holy name. Instead of producing fear in those who saw it, according to Ezekiel, wherever Israel went among the nations, "they profaned my (i.e. God's) holy name, for it was said of them 'These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave his land'" (Ezekiel 36:18-21). Thus God declared that he would regather his people out of the nations and bring them back to their own land, not for their sake, "but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ... Then the nations will know

that I am the Lord, ... when I show myself holy through you before their eyes (36:22ff.).⁸⁵

Moreover, the atoning sacrifice of the Jewish Messiah does not obviate the continuing revelatory role of Israel in history.⁸⁶ God continuously works directly through His intervention in history through the work of the Holy Spirit in individual human lives and through His people. Saucy here quotes Jacob Jocz, who wrote,

Jewish history is the visible, empirical act of revelation. It demonstrates to all who want to see that the God of Israel is not a philosophical concept, but the living God. He cannot be imprisoned in a book, no matter how sacred, and relegated to the past. He is still the enactor of history; he is still a Presence in human affairs and still acts against and on behalf of his people.⁸⁷

Saucy states unequivocally, "Interpreters of Scripture have increasingly affirmed that God has been providentially involved in the historically unique preservation of the people of Israel. ... Prophecy can only be fulfilled by a real nation, the restored nation of Israel."⁸⁸ The Christian life must be lived in this light, grounded in the revelation of the Bible. Profound thinkers recognize that the right of the Jewish people to exist as Jews has been guaranteed only through God's miraculous preservation of the Jewish people throughout history. Assimilation, that is, the disappearance of the Jewish people into other nations, has proven impossible: if not because of the Jews, then because of their neighbors who have refused to accept them. In fact, the horrors of the Holocaust, its crimes against the witnesses to the name of God, so far exceed the sufferings of any other people as a people that it is impossible to conceive of it in human terms.⁸⁹

In light of the Holocaust, some Protestant theologians wrestled deeply with its meaning, facing for the first time the anti-Semitism at the heart of their faith. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's friend and biographer, Eberhard Bethge, contended in a 1985 interview that Bonhoeffer began to analyze the anti-Semitism in Christian scripture and Christian thought while he was in prison awaiting execution. Although Metaxas has proven that Bethge was wrong about this, that Bonhoeffer realized what was at stake following *Kristallnacht*, it is still important to follow what Bethge told Barnett:

I've reread all the Bonhoeffer material with regard to the aspect of Bonhoeffer and the Jews. I've established, I believe, that my own awareness of the centrality for Bonhoeffer of the Jews — not just [our] deaconical obligation to them but their theological task — was much farther than I myself had realized. Now I'm trying, theologically, to discover where that began, that he never deviated from a Christocentric, innermost faith. In his *Ethics*, he truly confronted our weakness, when he said, "The Jews hold the question of Christ open." That stands in the *Ethics*.

Bethge continues,

We've read that for 30 years without really reading it. Now, suddenly, I see that. That, too, was something he sensed. His development from 1933 to the end can truly be established. He can't solve that now; we must solve it.

Recently, I wrote about Christology and the first commandment, and [my] basic

thesis is that Christ is Christ because, in Him, the first commandment is realized. That's why He's Christ. That means that, when a different god is made out of Christ ... then the first commandment is being violated. The Jews have the continuing task of reminding us of the first commandment. I'm trying, too, to describe how Bonhoeffer could pray to Christ, and the difference between a prayer to Christ that really worships a new god, or one that means the first commandment and the dethroning of other gods. ...

I'm trying to establish how some could confess the first thesis in Barmen ("*Solus Christus*"), and still be and remain anti-Semites. There lies the deficiency, and there's where the future work lies. The sociological and political roots of the confessors at Barmen have to be examined closely. I believe that Barth, too, was prepared to admit that even "*Solus Christus*" didn't erect any barriers against anti-Semitism.⁹⁰

After the war, Confessing Church member Helmut Gollwitzer explained,

We, too, had to learn that we had grown up with these prejudices theologically. At first, we thought that the Jews deserved our human pity, and that the Jewish Christians needed our brotherly solidarity... and [that] we had to help the Jews in Germany because they were a threatened people.

In the meantime, Karl Barth had progressed further theologically. His basis for demanding that we help the Jews was that they are the people of God. That was a new basis for understanding the Bible, Judaism, and, with that, for understanding anti-Semitism as well. The view that anti-Semitism was merely the antipathy of a majority against a minority had to be abolished.

...The Jews are truly the key. That is the essential point with the Jews, theologically and biblically: How do we go about unlearning this part of the Christian tradition? That remains one of the most provocative questions in German [sic] Christianity today!⁹¹

Journalist Katelyn Beaty provided a key linking Dietrich Bonhoeffer's realization that "The Jews hold the question of Christ open" to Karl Barth's insight that "The Word did not simply become any flesh. It became Jewish flesh." Barth wrote, "The pronouncements of the New Testament Christology ... relate always to a man who is seen to be not a man in general, a neutral man, but the conclusion and sum of the history of God with the people of Israel." Irenaeus had stated that "all flesh" (*pasa sarx*) has been created by God and is appointed for salvation: "What is more ignominious than dead flesh? On the other hand, what is more glorious than that same flesh once it is raised, having received incorruptibility as its portion?" Similarly, Tertullian declared that: "the flesh is the pivot of salvation (*caro cardo salutis*)" in his great *Apologia* of 208 "defending the Church's teaching on the body." Against those heretics who thought that God's taking on of human flesh blasphemous, Tertullian "presents the flesh as that through which heaven comes to earth. Out of His infinite love for humanity, God becomes enfleshed and in so doing makes the flesh the way of our returning to God." Following this line of thinking, we can trace the development of Bonhoeffer's new appreciation of not only the Jewish Christ, but also the *theological* role of the Jewish people throughout the Church Age.⁹² And in this light, Augustine's assertion of the "teaching of contempt" to explain the ongoing presence of Jews in history, can be redeemed. The Jews are God's witnesses

throughout history, bearing His revelation and making His identity unmistakable.

When Bonhoeffer wrote “The Jews hold the question of Christ open” he realized that the Jewishness of Jesus is what makes Jesus real, not an allegory, not a fable, not another god who can be remade in anyone’s image. In the Jewish Jesus, all particularity, distinctiveness, uniqueness, and individuality is upheld. In the Jewish Jesus, diversity is guaranteed against a homogeneous universality of humanity. That this is so is only true if the Jewish people continue to exist as a biblical people, one that finds its identity in a culture drawing upon the Hebrew Scriptures and the Jewish calendar, devoted in faithful witness to the identity of Christ and the God of Israel.

It pleased God to create a particular people, the Jewish people, out of all the nations in order to accomplish His soteriological plan of redemption in time and space. Through their sin at Sinai, he promised the Hebrews a kinsman-redeemer who would be their anointed king. But He did not come as they expected, but rather,

He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not (Isaiah 53:2).

The Jewishness of Jesus, as represented by Christ, must be remembered and affirmed by Christians, to remind the Jewish nation of their great commission to the nations as Christ-bearers but also as Witnesses to the truth and historicity of the God of Israel, the God of History. But this can only come by affirming Jewish cultural distinctiveness in the Body of Christ as a model for affirming the cultural diversity of the Church, the beauty of diversity that anti-Semitism has effaced for two millennia.

Heinrich Heine, a celebrated Christian author of Jewish descent who wrote in the German language, extolled the Bible as the “written fatherland ... of the children of God; it is our sacred inheritance from Jehovah.” Heine lamented that his “ancestors carried it about with them all over the world; they endured much grief, misfortune, disgrace, and hatred on its behalf.” Writing in a time in the throes of an anti-Semitic paroxysm, he wrote metaphorically about the end of the Muslim civilization in Spain, the *Convivencia*, which to him represented a time of freedom that had ended in the flames of intolerance and hatred. Heine’s play *Al-Mansur* (1820-1822) is about Muslims who had come under Catholic rule and the Inquisition in Spain following the *Reconquista*, but it is written against the anti-Semitism of Heine’s homeland, Germany. In the play, as the Qur’an is being burnt, Heine has the Muslim character, Hassan, chillingly predict the future, exclaiming, “This was only the prelude. Where they burn books, they will also burn people!”⁹³ The Jewishness of Jesus must be affirmed by Christians wherever they are. By affirming Jewish ethnic distinctiveness in the Body of Christ as a model for affirming ethnic diversity in the Church, Christians repudiate anti-Semitism. Barnett made it clear that this is a communal imperative. She pointed out the real lesson of the Holocaust: “Theologically and politically, the fates of Christians and Jews were bound together. But the tendency of most Germans, including those within the church, was to put an even greater dis-

tance between themselves and the Jews.”⁹⁴

The Confessing Church’s failure to take a firmer stand at Steglitz, Meusel wrote afterward, was not only a “tragedy ... but a sin of our people, and since we are members of our people and answerable before God for his people, it is our sin.”⁹⁵ “But the concept of sin,” at that time, Barnett sadly acknowledged, “and for that reason the concept of possible moral action, was still centered on the responsibility of individual Christians, not on the church’s collective responsibility.”⁹⁶

VI. The Present Conundrum

Today, we continue to sin, sixty-three years after the 1948 War of Israeli Independence, by not helping the Palestinians and the Israelis to make peace. Although new evidence of positive Arab attitudes towards the Jews and Zionism during the Mandate Period is beginning to come to light, the spin on the conflict continues to be set by extremists like Hajj Amin Al-Husseini, whose Muslim Brotherhood was financially supported, trained, and schooled by the Nazis. The tragic result of Husseini’s decision to join the cause of the Palestinian Arabs to the Nazis was the defeat of the Arabs by the Zionists after the Second World War. By going to war against the British, the Arab leadership lost support for their cause and undermined continued British presence in the mandated area. Jewish Zionists were able to plead their case much more effectively against the backdrop of Arab rejectionism.⁹⁷

Yet there is reason for hope. Lately, many Palestinian leaders have begun to recognize the importance of the Holocaust and the Second World War in relationship to their struggle for Palestinian sovereignty. In his book *Once Upon a Country*, Palestinian intellectual Sari Nusseibeh writes,

One day, while reading about two extraordinary philosophers with Jewish Viennese backgrounds, I ran across passages about the anti-Semitic scourge of the 1930s. As I read on, I felt the men’s suffocating sense of doom and terror due to their problems with citizenship, residency papers, travel documents, venial bureaucracies, the threat of property confiscation, and other humiliations. All at once I was reminded of my own home and my own people’s fate since 1947.

He continues,

That night, during a visit with Mother, I posed a question. Just suppose, I began, that in the early years of the century an elderly and learned Jewish gentleman from Europe had come to your father to consult with him about an urgent matter. And suppose this gentleman had told Grandfather that a looming human catastrophe of unimaginable proportions was about to befall the Jews of Europe. And suppose this gentleman added that as an Abrahamic cousin with historic ties to Palestine, he would like to prevent the genocide to come by seeking permission for his people to return to the shared homeland, to provide them with safety and refuge. What do you think Grandfather would have said? I asked her.

Nusseibeh writes,

Her answer surprised me. I was prepared for a long conversation full of conditions and clauses and caveats, but instead she replied straight away with a wave of her

hand, “What do you think? How could anyone have refused?”⁹⁸

But that is exactly what happened. Led by Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Palestinian leadership refused to allow the British to accept Jewish refugees, fighting Jewish immigration in the 1930s and 1940s tooth and claw. The British, concerned about the public opinion of the millions of Muslims in their Empire in India and the Middle East, did not act resolutely against the Arab Higher Committee, an office that they themselves had created to parallel the Zionists organization in Palestine. Allied with the Nazis, the AHC dragged their own people into the abyss. Even today, it is still illegal to teach about the Holocaust in many Arab countries.

I remember once, while I was taking notes from the Ottoman court registers at the Islamic court on Salah al-Din Street in East Jerusalem in 1986, the subject of the Holocaust came up. After I had mentioned that my great-grandparents had died at Theresienstadt, the young men with whom I shared the room vigorously denied that the Holocaust had ever occurred. Before I could respond, my friend, the retired imam of Al-Aqsa Mosque and Islamic judge Shaykh Muhammad Asad al-Imam al-Husseini, who had been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood during his long and storied career, rose in my defense. Looking calmly at the young men, at least one who was an early member of Hamas, he asked, “Where did all the millions of Jews of Europe go? They are no more.” Silent, the young men pondered his rebuke. I wondered if they had any respect for what this old man said. And I wondered when Shaykh Asad himself had realized that Arab opposition to Jewish immigration had been a terrible mistake. At his advanced age, he liked to reminisce about Jerusalem before the polarization of the Jews and Muslims that had begun in 1929 and culminated in the Nakba, the Palestinian Catastrophe, in 1948.

Christians stand with Israel for multiple reasons: because of the biblical history and prophecy; a desire to honor God’s work through the Jewish people; shame about the role of the churches during the Holocaust; and because they wish to make good for Christian sins against the Jewish people. Equally, they respect the Israelis for their courage, democracy, military, and contributions in the arts and sciences. And they see in Israel a reliable strategic partner in a region that has become drenched in blood.

However, as Kohl warned us, apocalypticism again characterizes the mood of some Christians, especially those who now wear the mantle of Christian Zionists. This apocalypticism has also found its way into the Jewish and Muslim worlds. Kohl urged Palestinian Christians to be “the small voice of warning and dissent” in the Middle East. Christians have to become “louder and more strategic,” says Kohl, in their relationship with Israel. They, like the Confessing Church, are realizing too late what their anti-Zionist hermeneutic has wrought politically for the Christians of the Middle East. The increasing tendency among Palestinians and their supporters to adopt a Marcionist posture relating to the Old Testament bodes only evil and must be repudiated loudly by Christians everywhere.

VII. Peace

We must learn to recognize God, but He does not always enable us to see Him — he vanishes from our sight, and hides in our neighbor. Luke 24:31 recounts another meeting of strangers. “And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.” As we treat our neighbor, the stranger, we treat God. As we embrace God in the Other, we love as He has loved us. This is the only way to choose to remember. When Israel walks with God, so will her neighbors, beginning with the Palestinians and the Arabs, who are her closest relations.⁹⁹ Conversely, Jewish and Gentile Christians must embrace distinctive Jewish churches. Christians must make room for the Jewish nation, and desist from seeing Jewish nationalism and self-determination as inherently opposed to Christianity, and here, Palestinian Christians must be in the vanguard.

In this dispensation, the State of Israel is on the same level as every other state in the international community, subject to the same forces that affect every other state: politics, economics, climate, hydrology, social issues, cultural trends, and religious movements. During the Sixth Day, every state is equidistant from God. Only on the Seventh Day, when God has completed his work in history, when the Messiah reigns and Israel is restored, will all of the injustices that characterize our age be judged and set right. In the meanwhile, we must continue to follow the greatest Commandment and the great Commission, in essentials, unity: in non-essentials, liberty, and in all things, love.

The relationship of the Palestinians and Jews in Israel and Palestine has been the most challenging and important of all political relationships in Church history. What will the Christian witness be in our generation? Will we stand as Esther stood?

How can I endure to see the calamity which shall befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? Esther 8:6 Purim, 2011.

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I dedicate this work in memory of Marie Mendel, the righteous gentile who took care of her husband's sister and her husband, my great-grandparents, Alexander and Jenny Moses, from the time of my grandfather's arrest in 1940 until their deportation to Theresienstadt in July, 1942.

¹Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), cited in Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, eds., *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 21.

²This is common among second generation Holocaust survivors in the United States. See Helen Epstein, *Children of the Holocaust: Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1979).

³Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, 11.

⁴Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The Churches under Hitler: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 82.

⁵Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest against Hitler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), Wolfgang Gerlach, *And the Witnesses Were Silent: The Confessing Church and the Persecution of the Jews*, trans. Victoria Barnett (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), originally published in German in 1987 and revised in 1993.

⁶James J. Sheehan, *German History 1770-1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) and Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

⁷Helmreich, *The Churches under Hitler: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 125.

⁸*Ibid.*, 25.

⁹Francis Fukayama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

¹⁰Jacob Neusner, *Toldot* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004).

¹¹Helmreich, 32, 84.

¹²For example, see Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994).

¹³Barnett, 133.

¹⁴Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), and *idem.*, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998).

¹⁵Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹⁶Barnett, 123.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 126.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 126.

²⁰Hilary Putnam, *Jewish Philosophy as a Guide to Life: Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas, Wittgenstein* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008).

²¹Elizabeth Drummond, Assistant Professor of History, Loyola Marymount University, in an email to author, dated May 13, 2010: "To be sure, the Prussian and later the German government encouraged the settlement of Germans in Poznan (I use this term to refer to the province, to distinguish it from the city), first in the Flottwellian era (1830s) and then again beginning with the founding of the Settlement Commission in 1886. Unfortunately, for the Prusso-German government, these settlement schemes were never particularly successful, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as the German-Polish conflict was intensifying. I'm not sure of the extent to which they encouraged specifically Jewish settlement, however. In the later period (1871 — 1914), Jewish out-migration from Poznan was significant, in part because Jews were getting squeezed between the Germans and the Poles. [Poznan's] Polish name is Inowroclaw, which was changed to Hohensalza by the Germans in 1904. ... Poznan had been Polish territory when the Nazis annexed it as the Warthegau, I suspect that they found it easiest to classify all Jews there as Polish, regardless of how the Jews themselves identified. By that time, of course, German Jews had been stripped of their citizenship and were excluded from the German nation, so it would not have made sense, by their own logic, for the Nazis to classify them as German."

²²Barnett, 126.

²³Heschel, *Aryan*, 23-4.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*, 127.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Deborah Hertz, *How Jews Became Germans: The History of Conversion and Assimilation in Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 9. Barnett, 127-8.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 10.

³⁰Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 271.

³¹Hertz, 9.

³²*Ibid.*, 10.

³³Ferguson, xlix. See also Map 3: "The German Diaspora in the 1920s," xx-xxi.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 1; See also *ibid.*, 250.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 249.

³⁶ Ibid., 128.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Hertz, 10.

³⁹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 15.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The Catholic failure to rescue its Jews, and the Protestant expulsion of the Jews from the church destroyed the witness of Christianity to modern Judaism, but guilt over the Holocaust has forced Christians to face the terrible legacy of Christian anti-Semitism following WWII. See, for example: Jacques Maritain, *Ransoming the Time* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948); idem., *On the Philosophy of History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957); M.C. D'Arcy, S.J., *The Meaning and Matter of History: A Christian View* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1959), and Richard Francis Crane, *The Passion of Israel: Jacques Maritain, Catholic Conscience, and the Holocaust* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2010).

⁴² Ferguson, 149.

⁴³ Hertz, 10.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Barnett, 124.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 127-8.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 132.

⁵² Ibid., 130.

⁵³ Ibid., 134-5.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 132.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 137.

⁵⁶ Emil L. Fackenheim, *The Jewish Return Into History: Reflections in the Age of Auschwitz and a New Jerusalem* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 35.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy — A Righteous Gentile vs. the Third Reich* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 314-8.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 318.

⁶¹ *Theresienstadt Lexikon*, "Christen," <http://www.ghetto-theresienstadt.de/pages/c/christen.htm>

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Data available only for percentage of all Christians.

⁶⁴ Kai Kjaer-Hansen, "With Hans Walter Hirschberg and Arthur Goldschmidt in Theresienstadt," *Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism Eighth International Conference Proceedings (Lake Balaton, Hungary 19-24 August 2007, 23 August 2007)*, <http://1cje.net/papers/2007.html>, < accessed May 4, 2010 > .

⁶⁵ Ibid., bibliography: Ghetto-theresienstadt, "Theresienstadt 1941-1945," <http://www.ghetto-theresienstadt.de/terezin-pamatnik.htm>; Hans Walter Hirschberg, "Christen im Ghetto" (unpublished ms., 8 pages), The Wiener Library, London, P.III.h. (Theresienstadt) No. 712; Hans Walter Hirschberg in *Prietenul*; Norwegian translation by Magne Solheim: "Jødekristne i gettoen i Theresienstadt", *Misjonsblad for Israel*, 1946, 122-123; Arthur Goldschmidt, "Geschichte der evangelischen Gemeinde Theresienstadt 1942-1945" (Tübingen: Furche-Verlag, 1948). See also *Mishkan* 60 (2009), a special edition edited by Kjaer-Hansen on "Chaim Yedidiah Pollack, A Controversial and Challenging Jewish Believer in Jesus."

⁶⁶ Judith Mendelsohn Rood and Paul W. Rood, "Is Christian Zionism Based on 'Bad Theology'?" *Cultural Encounters*, (Forthcoming, Spring, 2011).

⁶⁷ Naim Ateek, statement in Bethlehem, March 17, 2010) Christ at the Checkpoint Theology of the Land Conference; available at <http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com> and idem. "The Changing Theological Landscape," *Cornerstone* 58 (Autumn 2010): 3.

⁶⁸ Rood and Rood, "Christian Zionism," (forthcoming).

⁶⁹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Redemptive Event and History," *Basic Questions in Theology*, trans. George H. Krem (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 18.

⁷⁰ Adolph Sapir, *Christ and Israel*, ed. David Baron (Jerusalem: Keren Ahvah Meshihit, 2001); William E. Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming: God's Hope for a Restless World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1989, first published in 1917); Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministry, 2001) .

⁷¹ With Martin E. Marty, he co-edited the five-volume American Academy of Arts and Sciences *Fundamentalism Project*, Five Volumes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1987-1994).

⁷² Nur Musalaha, *The Bible and Zionism: Invented Traditions, Archeology and Post-Colonialism in Palestine-Israel* (New York: Zed Books, 2008) and Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (New York: Verso, 2009).

⁷³ I tell this story in part in my book, *Sacred Law in the Holy City: The Khedival Challenge to the Ottomans as seen from Jerusalem 1829-1841* (Leiden: Brill Academic Press, 2004).

⁷⁴ This era is one that I intend to expand upon in a future project.

⁷⁵ For example, Shlomo Sands' misguided *The Invention of the Jewish People* (New York: Verso, 2009).

⁷⁶ (Hamas cleric Ahmed al-Tamimi identified C[hristian] Z[ionism] as "the greatest danger to world truth, justice, and peace"). Jerusalem Newswire Editorial, "Hamas: Christian Zionism is Our Enemy," *Jerusalem Newswire*, August 22, 2005, http://www.jnewswire.com/article/527.June_5_2007. Quoted in Judith Mendelsohn Rood and Paul W. Rood, "Is Christian Zionism Based on "Bad Theology"? *Cultural Encounters* (Spring 2011: forthcoming).

⁷⁷ Even a Messianic Jewish scholar of the stature of Richard Harvey criticizes dispensationalism on the grounds of what he calls its: 1) "amalgam of rationalism, romanticism, and historical consciousness"; 2) "its hermeneutical methods"; and 3) its theology, which, he claims, posits "the problem of Israel and the Church as two peoples of God." He concludes that these doctrines "will not gain acceptance with the majority of Messianic Jews, and they will look for alternatives." Richard Harvey, "A Typology of Messianic Jewish Theology," *Mishkan* 57 (Winter 2009): 11-23, 15.

⁷⁸ "Israel slams Catholic Statement on Mideast, Singling Out Archbishop," *CNN World*, October 24, 2010, http://articles.cnn.com/2010-10-24/world/mideast.catholic.bishops_1_catholic-bishops-synod-foreign-minister-danny-ayalon?_s=PM:WORLD < accessed January 11, 2011 > .

⁷⁹ Pannenberg, 18.

⁸⁰ Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapid: Baker Books, 2000).

⁸¹ Saucy, 298-9.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 304.

⁸³ Arend Th. van Leeuwen, *Christianity in World History* (New York: Scribner's, 1964) 101 quoted in Saucy, 312.

⁸⁴ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part Two: From Noah to Abraham* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964), 180, Saucy, 304.

⁸⁵ Saucy, 315.

⁸⁶ R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

⁸⁷ Jacob Jocz, *A Theology of Election* (New York: McMillan, 1958), quoted in Saucy, 318.

⁸⁸ Saucy, 323.

⁸⁹ The twenty-fifth anniversary of Claude Lanzmann's magnum opus *Shoah* again gives us the opportunity to ponder the meaning of the incomprehensible war of extermination perpetrated against the Jews of Europe.

⁹⁰ Barnett, 132.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Katelyn Beaty "The Dusty Messiah: Why I No Longer Believe in a Spiritual Jesus," *Christianity Today* (January 2010): 38-9.

⁹³ Stephan J. Whitfield, "Where They Burn Books," *Modern Judaism* 22(2002): 213-4.

⁹⁴ Barnett, 131.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism 1917-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) and also the less positive *ibid.*, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948-1967* (Berkeley: University of California, Press, 2010).

⁹⁸ Sari Nusseibeh (with Anthony David), *Once Upon a Country: A Palestinian Life* (New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 461-2.

⁹⁹ Tony Maalouf, *Arabs in the Shadow of Israel: The Unfolding of God's Prophetic Plan for Ishmael's Line* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic and Professional, 2003).